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This document is based on the theory that the ultimate success of the Head Start program in significantly correcting the educational disabilities of culturally deprived children depends on involving and educating the parents. This method would at least improve the immediate family environment of the deprived child. This document therefore sets out a curriculum of training for those who intend to train parents to participate in Head Start. The curriculum embodies the content areas, methodology, techniques, and skills the trainer will need and use in subsequent parent involvement sessions. Nine major topical areas are discussed in this curriculum guide: (1) the impact of poverty on family life, (2) teamwork for effective parent participation, (3) supervision, (4) recruitment of parents, (5) work with groups, (6) involvement of the individual parent, (7) community assessment, (8) community action, and (9) development and implementation of training programs for parent participation. (WD)

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HEAD START

A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR PARENT PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT HEAD START

A CURRICULUM OF TRAINING FOR PARENT PARTICIPATION IN PROJECT HEAD START

PS001537

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Office of Economic Opportunity

Project Head Start

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INTRODUCTION

PARENT PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECT HEAD START

Project Head Start is a community action program in the War on Poverty. It is funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.

Both in theory and in action, the Head Start program combats the lifelong social, educational, and financial inequities faced by the economically disadvantaged preschool child, his family, and the community in which he lives. It is Head Start's expressed conviction, although one that has not always been put into practice, that the educational gains made by the child in Head Start must be reinforced by parallel gains in the family and in the community. To achieve this goal, Head Start provides for the involvement of the child's parents in the educational experiences he receives in the early childhood development center. Opportunities, thus, are afforded the child's parents and other members of his family to acquire a richer appreciation of the young child's needs. These needs are perceived in terms of the social and educational development necessary if the child is to achieve self-fulfillment in a society that is increasingly technological, depersonalized, and therefore insensitive to the aspirations of those who have not shared in the affluence and power that reside in settings where that affluence abounds.

A tenet of the community action program is that local residents -- in this case the parents of Head Start children -- are themselves the primary movers in achieving the program's goals. Further, Head Start is based on the premise that a comprehensive interdisciplinary attack on the problems of children -- in concert with efforts of local residents -- can be instrumental in resolving many of their problems, on a front extending from the neighborhood to the nation.

Project Head Start, then, attacks poverty through the early education of the child within the context of his family and community. The outreach of every Head Start program, thus, goes far beyond the educational processes -- as important as these processes are -- to involve the parents and family of the child at a highly meaningful level. The benefits of Head Start, as envisioned in this approach, are rooted in "change." These changes must take place in the family itself, in the community, and in the social forces that have an impact on both. It is clear that the success of Head Start in bringing about any substantial changes through its efforts demands the involvement of the parents, parental substitutes, and families of children enrolled in its programs. This involvement begins with the inception of a Head Start program in any community and should gain vigor and vitality as that program is planned, implemented, and developed. Successful parental involvement permeates every aspect of Head Start and creates an impact on other antipoverty programs, on other institutions in the community, and on the social conditions that have formed the systems that embrace the economically disadvantaged child and his family.

There is no doubt that the parents of Head Start children desire greater benefits for their children than they themselves have experienced. There is no question but that the vast majority of these parents, given the support and encouragement of sensitive and wise helpers, can make important changes in the conditions that limit the opportunities open to them and their children.

Project Head Start offers such supports to parents to fulfill the aspirations they have for themselves and their families. Project Head Start, then, must find new ways for parents to participate and become deeply involved in decision-making about the program and in the development of activities that they deem helpful and important in meeting their particular needs and conditions.

For some parents participation may begin on a very simple level and move to more complex levels. For other parents the movement will be immediate, because of past experiences, into more complex levels of sharing and giving. Every Head Start program is obligated to provide the channels through which such participation and involvement can be provided for and enriched. Unless this happens, the deep and meaningful goals of Head Start will not be achieved and the program itself will remain a creative experience for the preschool child in a setting that is not reinforced by needed changes in social systems, such as the educational system, into which the child will move upon completion of his Head Start experience.

This sharing in determinations for the future is one of the primary aims of parent participation and involvement in Project Head Start.

THE CURRICULUM

This curriculum for training in parent involvement was developed during the course of a pilot project for parent participation in Project Head Start, undertaken in 1967 in OEO Region I. The training program was a result of a collaborative effort by the National Office of Project Head Start and the Child Study Association of America. The training staff of the Child Study Association, a broad interdisciplinary team with backgrounds in education, family counseling, early childhood development, community work, and social work, carried major responsibility for the development of its content. Much that is incorporated in this document is the result of the teaching-learning process that took place in the course of training during the pilot project. Also reflected are the experiences of the training staff in their consultations with local Head Start centers and programs and in their continuing contacts with trainees.

The content of the curriculum is limited to material that deals directly with parent participation and reflects only this one aspect of the Head Start program, which has many interrelated facets. The training materials included here must be perceived as a part of the larger program and as dovetailing with equally sound training programs in other areas of Head Start.

How and by Whom It Can Be Used

This curriculum has greatest relevance for those who have had experience and training in teaching and in education in general. It is directed toward providing major helps to those who train practitioners, rather than to the practitioners themselves.

As a curriculum, rather than a syllabus, manual, or teaching plan, it embodies content areas, methodology, techniques, and skills to guide the creative trainer who can adjust its contents to the needs of the group to be trained, the setting in which the training takes place, and the conditions of training.

It is not perceived as a "completed" document. It is a curriculum that can be further developed, tested for effectiveness, and refined for maximum usefulness by trainers.

THE TRAINER

The trainer in a Head Start training program conveys knowledge and information, skills and techniques, and methodology to those he trains. He is also aware of the importance of the attitudes and values that affect the performance of the trainees, because of the impact these factors have in the practice setting.

This implies that the trainer has knowledge and experience that can be drawn upon in the preparation of teaching materials and a familiarity with the programs to which the training experience is related and from which trainees come. The trainer must also have an involvement, beyond the intellectual level, with some of the problems implicit in the job roles carried by the trainees. He should be kept, or should keep himself, in touch with the operational features of the Head Start programs to which the trainee is related; he will find it helpful to maintain the kind of knowledge of these features that permits him to understand the formal and informal systems that are at work within the program.

The trainer, of course, should be fully conversant with the material he teaches. The trainer's preparation begins far in advance of actual training sessions. He has a responsibility, further, not only to prepare carefully for his tasks as a trainer, but to constantly update his knowledge and skills. The trainer is a role model for those he trains. Therefore, he should conduct himself professionally and, in personal relationships, in keeping with what he hopes to teach the trainee.

There are many levels of readiness for carrying out the functions of a trainer. All trainers are not fully ready to perform excellently in all the respects described above when their work begins. It is important, however, that the trainer grow in his ability to relate theory to practice, concept to practical application, and practical application to the operational factors in the lives of the trainees.

It is hoped that in Head Start training programs the separation between education and training will not be so rigidly drawn by the trainers that their ultimate goal will be to prepare the trainees to perform particular tasks, as important as they may be. It is to be hoped, rather, that in preparation for specific tasks trainees will also be stimulated to a greater search for knowledge that will enable them better to understand the milieu in which they serve: the field of human relations. In this view, it is not only important to teach the "how to's," but also the "why's." Unless the trainer is able to effect a blend of these, a unique opportunity for teaching and learning will be missed.

For this reason, the training staff of the Child Study Association of America-Project Head Start training program has perceived this curriculum in broad terms. An attempt has been made to present an amalgam of the educational principles and the training components essential to the provision of broad knowledge and, at the same time, vital to the understanding and use of techniques and skills.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The staff of the Child Study Association of America-Project Head Start Training Program acknowledges with appreciation the contributions of many helpful colleagues and associates in the completion of this curriculum. We particularly wish to thank Mrs. Bessie Draper, Program Specialist for Parent Participation in Project Head Start, and Jule Sugarman, Associate Director of Head Start, for their encouragement and support. Head Start parent consultants, regional training officers, CAP staff and staff of State OEO offices, staff of child development centers, and parents of Head Start children from many communities over the nation have been thoughtful readers of this document and have provided insights and suggestions of much relevance for its future usefulness. Our editor, Clark Wiswell, labored diligently and with infinite patience to render this material both readable and interesting. The clerical staff of the Head Start training office, under the direction of Miss Shirley Tunstall, labored with equal diligence in preparing the manuscript.

Appreciation is particularly expressed for the contributions of the participants of the 1967 Training Program for Parent Participation in OEO Region I, without whose stimulation, inspiration, and probing exploration of content this document could not have been completed.

Chapter I

THE IMPACT OF POVERTY ON FAMILY LIFE

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE POOR

It is a widely held view in our society that all Americans have equal access to opportunity and equal means available to them for the achievement of success -- measured in terms of job, income, education, and place of residence. According to this view, the individual is seen as the prime mover of his own destiny -- through initiative, hard work, and responsibility anyone can achieve success. The mass media -- radio, television, newspapers, and magazines -- reinforce this view.

There is a tendency to overlook or deny the reality that many Americans do not have equal access to opportunity, that poverty makes it extremely difficult to live up to the ideals of American family life. It is a mystery to many Americans why today's poor are unable to rise above their poverty as did the poor of earlier generations. The fact is the America of today is considerably different from the America of forty or fifty years ago. The Advisory Council on Public Welfare comments:

> America is discovering that in a prolonged period of continuous economic growth, there are still more than 34 million of its citizens living in bleak and separate prisons of poverty. It has become obvious that it will take more than great general prosperity to free them. Only a short time ago many of us believed that it would.
>
> We have discovered that the economic and social pressures generated by a swiftly developing technology fall with unequal weight upon various members of our society.
>
> Tenant farmers forced into urban ghettos by the mechanization of farming are expected to adapt like 19th century settlers on the western frontier or experienced assembly line technicians. Children -- for all our public affirmations -- are not only neglected but expected to bear the full burden of the alleged deficiencies of their parents.
>
> These are only a few examples of the ways our failure to adapt our institutional structure to changing needs and conditions has taken its toll from those least able to protect themselves.(1)

The myth still prevails, however, that today's poor should be able to overcome their poverty by their own efforts. Inferiority, psychological weakness, and structural deficiencies in the family are cited to explain why the poor have not been able to do. In this regard, it is sometimes claimed that the movement toward preschool education for children from poverty families represents the failure or inadequacy of the family to fulfill its child-rearing functions.

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1. Advisory Council on Public Welfare. Having the Power, We Have the Duty. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966. P.3.

These beliefs and attitudes obstruct the development of mutual trust and understanding between the poor and those who work with them and in their behalf and, consequently, impede the development of effective programs for change.

THE CONDITION OF POVERTY

The poverty population in America varies considerably in ethnic and racial background and in geographic location. Great diversity exists in their family life and in the ways they rear their children. There is no one family type or model.

The family that is poor is chronically faced with crises and pressures that undermine its stability. Jobs are unavailable or intermittent. Those that are available do not pay enough to support a family. Housing is often deteriorated and overcrowded. Schools tend to be inferior. Health and medical facilities and services are nonexistent or poorly organized. Social welfare, recreation, and transportation are severely deficient.

Although society expects the male to be the primary economic provider for his wife and children, a severe lack of employment and job-training opportunities makes it extremely difficult for the male who is poor to measure up to such norms. Such pressures tend to weaken the fabric of family life and make it difficult for the male to fulfill his role as husband and father.

The lack of sufficient income, further, places severe restrictions on many important areas of family living. A comparison between the choices and opportunities available to high- and low-income families in vital areas that affect the health and welfare of the family is revealing. In terms of medical care, for example, the person of higher income can choose a doctor or health care plan that is judged to meet the needs of family members. The person who is poor, unable to afford a private doctor or a health plan, must rely on public services to meet his family's health and medical needs even though there is recognition that such services may be inadequate.

In their constant struggle to provide the bare necessities for their families, parents must make difficult choices between what they may want and what they can actually get. Shall they buy food or pay the rent? Shall they buy a winter coat for the school-age child or fuel to heat the home?

INSTITUTIONAL SERVICES

A connection exists between family life and the availability and quality of institutional services. Deficiencies in the way public and private institutions are organized to provide and deliver their services account for some of the major problems families have in providing adequately for the welfare of their children. Health and welfare services, for example, are often not available to parents who are poor. Where they do exist, their use often requires other supportive services that are not accessible to the parent. He is therefore forced to forego the services that are available.

Parents find it difficult to adjust their family responsibilities to the routines and policies of hospitals and clinics. Requests to take children within the same family to different medical facilities may require extensive traveling and tax the resources of families. Overcrowded clinics and hospitals necessitate excessive waiting periods. Fees for medical services may be beyond the reach of some poor families. Inadequate follow-up on medical problems and discontinuity in relationships between family members and medical personnel serve to depersonalize services.(2)

ATTITUDES AND VALUES OF THE POOR

A wide gap in communication exists in American communities between the poor and persons who plan and administer programs that affect them.

By and large, the poor are unseen and unheard in the decision-making councils of institutions, neighborhoods, and larger communities of the cities and nation. The poor are planned for and not with in terms of how they shall live, what goods are available for their consumption, and how and to what extent their children shall be educated. Lack of involvement in decision-making roles and activities causes poor people to feel that they are powerless to influence or control the forces that affect their lives.

The lack of communication, of opportunities for decision-making, and of participation in community life contributes to the isolation and separation of the poor from the mainstream of society. These conditions deny rights that in a democratic society should be available to all citizens and foster the notion that the poor are a separate class.

There is an acknowledgement that not a great deal is known about how the poor live and how they rear their children. Therefore they tend to be viewed statistically rather than as human beings. Figures on illegitimacy, juvenile delinquency, and family breakdown are utilized to depict, and generalize about, their behavior.

A perspective is needed that would take into account socio-cultural factors that influence behavior. It should be recognized that patterns of family life and child-rearing often represent adaptations to stresses and deprivations that derive from limited choices rather than from preferred responses. Given a new and better set of circumstances and opportunities, different choices might be made. Thus, the tendency to describe and interpret behavior of the poor as if the negative characteristics attributed to them are fixed and unchangeable would be avoided.

By and large, parents who are poor do know what they want for themselves and their children. Parents express concern about the quality of the education their children receive. They want better jobs and more job-related training, improved housing, and adequate health and medical care. Increased police protection, better traffic and safety precautions, and provisions for supervised recreation in their neighborhoods are often stated as pressing needs.

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2. Martin L. Birnbaum, Mary Gay Harm, and Selma B. Ortof, The Content for Training in Project ENABLE. New York: Child Study Association of America, 1967. Pp. 26-27.

THE CHILD AND HIS FAMILY

For the child there is no substitute for the sense of security he derives from his family relationships. The child's parents are important role models for him. His desire for their love, approval, and acceptance influences the child to want to please them by adopting their ways. What he expects to achieve and become is influenced by the hopes and aspirations his parents have for him. Through his ties with the emotionally significant adults in his life, the child absorbs the attitudes, values, habits, and customs of the groups to which he belongs. Parental beliefs, feelings, behavior, and attitudes toward society are important sources for the child's developing notions about the world around him and his place within it.

Forces operate within the family to affect the child's educational development. For example, a child who goes to school hungry will have little energy to apply to learning; the child kept out of school until his parents can afford to clothe him will fall behind in his studies; children who are continuously uprooted because of problems in housing will have difficulties in developing and maintaining sound learning patterns. In a home where there is not enough money to feed, house, and clothe the children, such educational necessities as books, toys, and recreation become rare luxuries.

A lack of attention to the development of language, reading, and play skills may stem from the preoccupation of parents with the necessity of meeting the physical needs of their children rather than from a lack of interest or motivation. Also, parents may not recognize the importance of the development of these skills, since in their own experiences these may not have been considered necessary. They may accept the goals for education but be unfamiliar with the process relating to the achievement of these goals. Although such parents believe that education provides an opportunity to get ahead in life, they may not relate this belief to specific early skills.

In many communities parents are requesting a greater voice in the education of their children. The functioning of school systems in poverty areas, for example, arouses considerable ferment, and parents want to know why the schools in their neighborhoods are inferior to those in higher-income communities. However negatively the segments of the community beyond the poverty-stricken area may view this activity in the low-income community, acknowledgement must be made of the parents' expressed awareness of the necessity for greater attention to the particular needs of their children.

The same kinds of concerns are developing around the thrust for social justice in many levels of society. Children who are a part of the life of the family are not deterred from sharing in these activities and have, in some sections of the country, displayed a courage equal to that of many adults. Far from expressing alienation from society, these families are displaying an involvement at a very deep level and a willingness to risk their own security in order to achieve a sounder basis for the future for themselves and their children. The child in such a setting inevitably gains a new perception of himself and his parents. Even as he has been affected in the past by attitudes that conveyed apathy and hopelessness, he is now affected by an openness of spirit and motivated to share an improved family and community life.

If families who are poor are to contribute relevantly to the formation of future social policy, they may need assistance in acquiring the know-how to negotiate the social systems where decisions are made. The educational experience can be more meaningful when combined with the social experiences offered children and their families by programs sponsored by the War on Poverty and similarly motivated programs under public and private auspices. The combination can become a significant force in strengthening the lives of children and their families who are now the victims of deprivation.

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Chapter II

TEAMWORK FOR EFFECTIVE PARENT PARTICIPATION

WHAT IS TEAMWORK?

Teamwork in Project Head Start is the concerted action of staff members, parents, and volunteers to achieve the purposes and goals of the Head Start program. It is the acknowledgement that the total work of Head Start, with children and their families, is one effort, with a variety of individuals carrying responsibility for different parts of that one effort. Teamwork is a prerequisite at every level of Head Start -- in councils and committees, in delegate and grantee agencies, and in child development centers -- and in situations where representatives of all these levels work together. Unless these individuals act in concert, each one understanding and carrying his share of the tasks with competency and integrity, even as he understands and supports the total effort, the work of Head Start will not achieve its full potential.

This chapter covers teamwork as it relates to the staff of a child development center, and specifically as it relates to the work of that staff in the area of parent participation and involvement in the center. The guiding principles discussed can be applied to the work of any team in the program, at whatever level. It is important, also, to note that various kinds of subteams may be usefully employed in a center: participant-staff, staff, and participant. Of crucial importance is the relating of these subteams to each other and to the overall team that is responsible for the coordination of the work of the center. Some parents of Head Start children can reasonably be expected to serve on all teams. Some are employed as staff of the center and they would be members of staff teams. As participants, they would also serve in other combinations.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The Head Start team should be composed of persons who can work cooperatively and responsibly with others.
2. Each member of the team should have a role that relates to, and interlocks with, the roles of other team members. He must understand the program and his place in it. It is important that he also understand the nature of the responsibilities carried by other team members.
3. The team must have a leader. This leader may be the director or a staff member assigned by him. Or the leader may be democratically chosen by team members from among their number.
4. The team should have regularly scheduled meetings.
5. Team members should agree on the courses of action to be taken by the team as a whole. The specific responsibilities of each team member in relation to those agreed-upon goals should be understood by all.
6. Channels of communication must be kept open so that team members are aware of their progress (or lack of it) toward team goals and of the contributions of each member.
7. The team should periodically evaluate its efforts.

THE TEAM AND PARENT PARTICIPATION

Each member of the team in the child development center has an important contribution to make. The role each performs interlocks with the roles of the other members. For example, a teacher may observe an existing or potential health problem in a child. This observation would be followed up by the nurse, who would make a home visit to the family, suggesting to them that they utilize a community health service. The parent aide would then assist the family in making effective use of the community health service. The center's parent advisory committee would also be concerned, since this group is studying why Head Start parents fail to take full advantage of community health and medical services.

While the total staff is involved in the promotion of parent participation, there are specific jobs, such as those of the parent activities coordinator and the parent aide, that carry the major responsibility for the planning and implementation of the parent program. Staffing patterns vary from center to center, but it is vital that Head Start programs make adequate provision for staff to assume primary responsibility for the parent program. These staff members, and the parents and volunteers who work closely with them, represent a subgroup, whose area of concentration is the parent program, within the center team.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEAM MEMBERS

Team members must perform a variety of tasks in order to achieve the goals for parent involvement. A frequent complaint of Head Start staff members who carry assignments for the parent program is that they do not have enough time to complete all of the work that must be done. It is important, therefore, to establish a division of responsibilities.

Equally important is a recognition on the part of program planners of the range and scope of job activities that Head Start staff members can perform with adequate training and supervision. A problem that frequently delays the achievement of the goals for parent involvement is underestimation of the readiness of staff members to perform various job roles with help and support. Failure to recognize this may contribute to the underutilization of staff.

Table 1 outlines the administrative and program responsibilities for implementing an effective parent program. These responsibilities can be assigned to different members of the team: staff, parents, and volunteers. Wide variations exist between Head Start programs in the number and types of job positions. Job titles, therefore, are not included in the table, so that flexibility can be maintained in determining the team members who should, most appropriately, carry certain job responsibilities.

REQUIREMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE TEAMWORK

Positive Attitudes Toward Teamwork

Some individuals prefer to work alone or desire to be star performers. Persons with such attitudes generally do not make good team members. The team concept requires persons who can work cooperatively, who appreciate the value of teamwork, and who can respect the contributions of those who work with them.

Table 1. Responsibilities of team members

TASKS	ACTIVITIES
Provision of sanction and support for the parent involvement program	1. Interpret to Head Start staff, volunteers, parents, and community groups and individuals the purposes and goals for parent involvement 2. Enlist the support of these individuals and groups for the program 3. Establish expectations for staff functioning
Provision of a staff structure for the implementation of the program	1. Determine the type, number, and qualifications of staff to be assigned to the parent program 2. Develop job descriptions for these staff members 3. Supervise the staff person who carries primary responsibility for the parent program 4. Establish lines of responsibility between staff
Preparation of staff, parents, and volunteers for their role assignments	1. Orient parents and volunteers 2. Provide on-the-job training of staff, parents, and volunteers 3. Supervise staff assigned to the parent program 4. Provide resources for staff working with parent groups
Coordination of parent involvement activities	1. Keep staff informed of the current and projected actions of parent groups 2. Place in communication with each other, groups that are working separately on common issues

Table 1 (continued)

TASKS	ACTIVITIES
Coordination of parent involvement activities (continued)	3. Maintain close contact with community groups and organizations that assist the center 4. Bring to the attention of appropriate Head Start staff relevant information about families and the community 5. Lead team meetings 6. Prepare reports related to the parent program
Recruitment and home visiting	1. Interpret the Head Start program and the roles parents can play 2. Recruit parents for Head Start activities 3. Note any individual and family problems encountered 4. Give information, if needed, about community services available to individuals and families, such as job training, consumer education, welfare, etc. 5. Note any potential leaders 6. Gather knowledge about the community, its resources, and what it appears to need (community assessment) 7. Identify special skills and interests of parents 8. Seek insights of parents that can be useful in work with children 9. Record relevant information received during recruitment

Table 1 (continued)

TASKS	ACTIVITIES
Facilitation of the use of community services	1. Inform parents of the kinds of local services available to them
	2. Explain how to use community resources
	3. Locate services to meet the needs of parents
	4. Help parents with the problems they encounter in making use of services
	5. Provide escort services for children and parents
	6. Apprise agencies of family situations that require attention
	7. Inform agencies of the problems families have that cause them to underutilize agency services
Promotion of effective parent observation and participation in the classroom	1. Develop educational workshops for parents
	2. Orient parents
	3. Provide instruction in the techniques for conducting or assisting in classroom activities
	4. Define the role and range of tasks parents can perform in the classroom
	5. Involve parents in an evaluation of their classroom experiences
	6. Elicit parental suggestions for the improvement of classroom activities
	7. Involve parents in curriculum planning

Table 1 (continued)

TASKS	ACTIVITIES
Community action	1. Establish working relationships with community groups, agencies, and institutions 2. Accompany parents to civic and political meetings in the community 3. Arrange and accompany parents to meetings with community officials, school personnel, politicians, etc. 4. Assist parents in the development of tenant councils, block clubs, welfare recipient groups, etc. 5. Promote the efforts of parents to identify and secure needed social welfare services 6. Recruit volunteers for community activities 7. Interpret community concerns and needs to civic and political groups
Work with groups	1. Lead large meetings that interpret and discuss the center's program and activities 2. Serve as staff advisors to such groups as parent committees, advisory bodies, social, educational, and parent discussion groups

Understanding the Roles of the Team Member

Team members must understand the responsibilities connected with their jobs -- how these responsibilities interrelate with, and are different from, those of other team members. Lines of responsibility between team members should be explicit. A formal structure for the team, with well-defined roles and responsibilities for each team member, enhances individual job performance. Each team member thus understands what is expected of him and what he can expect from other members. Sound evaluation by the team of its performance rests upon each member's knowledge of his responsibilities and those of other members.

Head Start teams are composed of individuals with different social and economic status. It is important that such factors do not become a basis for evaluating the worth of team members. The experiences each person brings to the job and the contributions he is capable of making should be respected. In this regard the professionals and nonprofessionals on the team must recognize and accept that there is a great deal that can be learned from one another.

Communication Among Team Members

Evaluation of the informal and formal patterns of communication within a team helps to determine whether this important aspect of teamwork is functioning smoothly. For instance, how often and how well do team members keep one another informed? Is there an easy sharing between them and do they show an interest in each other's work? Is there an established structure for reporting on job assignments? What can or needs to be done to improve communication between members of the team?

Democratic Functioning

The way decisions are made is an indication of whether the team is functioning democratically. Members should share in the decisions that affect their work. Opinions and contributions of team members should receive equal weight and attention.

Attitudes toward authority on the team may be a significant factor in team functioning. There will always be members with greater authority than others, but this authority should be exercised judiciously and with full regard for the goals of team functioning and the jobs to be done.

Freedom of expression is important. Team members should feel free to discuss concerns and issues without fear.

Team Leadership

The team leader is responsible for guiding and coordinating the work of the team. He serves as a link between team members, managing the lines of responsibility and communication between them. The team leader also must keep the team focused on the tasks required to achieve its objectives.

Team Activity

The team meeting is the setting for planning, communication, and integration of work efforts. In these meetings the team may be involved in a number of important actions that facilitate the development of the parent program:

1. Reporting and discussion of observations made by various team members about program activities, community life, and individual work with parents. As individuals share information and experiences, the understanding of all team members is enriched, and natural opportunities for the introduction of knowledge are provided.

2. Planning for work assignments. The team meeting is the place where essential roles and activities are discussed and assigned to staff, parents, and volunteers. This planning helps team members gain a better appreciation of one another's job-related activities. The development of job descriptions can be a productive team activity, with team members contributing and assuming responsibility for determining what their specific duties should include. This process clarifies role functioning.

3. Evaluation of team activity. The effective team continually evaluaates its work. What worked, what did not, and what the reasons are for the results are the types of questions that contribute to the improvement of teamwork. An effective way of measuring the progress of the team is to assess periodically whether the goals for parent involvement are being achieved.

Chapter III

SUPERVISION

FUNCTIONS

Supervision includes administrative, helping, and teaching functions. It is the means for coordinating the work of all personnel, including volunteer workers. It also enables the staff to carry out its job responsibilities and improve job performance by providing training and support according to individual needs.

Administratively, supervision ensures that the work of the center is accomplished in an efficient, orderly manner. The supervisor provides assistance in the carrying out of job responsibilities. For example, the supervisor may be called upon to provide necessary resources or to resolve conflicts between staff members. Supervision is also the means whereby each worker's job is related to, and coordinated with, the total program. In this sense, supervision can be a means of valuing and validating each job, both as a unique task in itself and as an important part of the total program.

As teaching, supervision is a method for increasing the job competence of each worker. It is assumed that the worker can and will learn, change, grow, and develop if the overseeing of his work is properly conceived and conducted. This teaching may be conducted in a one-to-one relationship or with a group of workers who perform the same or similar tasks. It is, however, geared to the development of each worker as an individual, seeking to release and build upon the potential he brings to the job. Supervision, therefore, is not patterned on the historic master-apprentice model, "Do as I say and you will do your job properly," but on an exchange of knowledge and information between supervisor and supervisee. It involves an examination of the worker's attitudes and feelings as they affect his work and the development and refinement of his skills and techniques. This content for teaching is geared to the individual needs, strengths, and style of work of the staff members.

METHODOLOGY

The staff of each Head Start center establishes its own methodology, or operating procedures, for supervision. The methodology can range from the informal, relatively unorganized and spontaneous to the highly organized and orderly. Supervisory staff chooses the methodology to be used. Whatever choice is made, there should be periodic evaluation of its effectiveness by both supervisors and supervisees.

The following model is an example of highly organized methodology for supervision. It is based on the assumption that planned organization results in a more effective Head Start program. It should be noted that highly organized methods of supervision need not result in rigidity, inflexibility, or authoritarianism. While the degree of organization suggested here may not be common to most Head Start centers, it has been used effectively in some preschool programs similar to Head Start. Appropriate modifications in areas such as job responsibilities, use of volunteers and aides, and the allocation of time were required.

Individual Conferences. Supervision is conducted through regularly scheduled conferences. For inexperienced workers or those with special needs, weekly conferences are helpful. For more experienced, self-sufficient workers, biweekly conferences may suffice. The value placed on these conferences should be such that disruptions -- answering phone calls and the intrusion of others into the room -- should not ordinarily be allowed.

Contingencies. The supervisor should be available for discussion of special problems and accessible in a crisis that may require immediate help or support.

Agenda for conference. An agreed-upon agenda should be set before each conference so that the conference can be clearly focused and both supervisor and worker will have sufficient time to prepare. Preparation is vital if supervision is to reach its potential. On-the-job time should be allocated for such preparation.

Preparation for conference. The kind of preparation should be specified. For example, the worker can be assigned responsibility for writing reports or anecdotal, narrative records that will provide part of the content for discussion. Similarly, the supervisor can assign appropriate reading as the basis for discussion. Again, on-the-job time should be allocated for this purpose.

Structure of supervisory relationship. The organizational structure, clearly delineating lines of authority, responsibility, and accountability, should specify supervisory relationships for all job positions. Each worker should be assigned one, and only one, supervisor. This supervisor should remain constant even when the demands of teamwork require a temporary realignment of staff.

Supervisors should be drawn from qualified, employed staff within the center. Volunteers, including board members and outside resource persons, are not properly used in this capacity.

Grievances. Formal provision should be made for the worker to take unresolved conflicts with his supervisor to the next higher supervisory level. However, all issues must first be discussed with the immediate supervisor, and the worker must inform the supervisor of his decision to go higher if a satisfactory understanding is not achieved. Adherence to this policy helps to forestall confusion or the manipulation or undermining of the supervisory relationship.

Supplementary methods. Additional methods, including group conferences, training programs, in-service training, staff meetings, consultation, structured observations, and group supervision, can supplement, but not replace, individual supervision.

Group supervision. Group supervision can save time for workers and the supervisor when the following conditions exist:

1. All members of the group are performing the same or similar job tasks.
2. The same supervisor has been assigned to all staff members in the group.

3. The same information is given to each staff member.
4. Work concerns and problems are likely to be the same.
5. Correlation of efforts in regard to specific tasks is needed.

Workers can support each other and learn through sharing common problems and experiences. Group supervision is also a means for good feedback of results of supervision.

Appropriate content for group supervision would include orientation, discussion of special issues or crisis situations, and common problems of the group.

Inappropriate content would include discussion of the personal problems of a worker, criticisms of the worker, or the revealing of confidential exchanges between supervisor and worker since this violates the integrity of both.

Orientation. Orientation to Head Start and the center is an essential step in the supervisory process. Orientation includes the history, purpose, policies, structure, program components, and available resources of OEO, Head Start, and the center. The immediate needs of the program may also be a part of orientation.

Understanding of responsibilities. The basis of sound supervision and a quality program is a clear understanding by the worker of his job responsibilities and clear specification of the expectations for which he will be held accountable. Unnecessary confusion and conflict will result when responsibilities and expectations are not clearly stated and understood, and therefore not fulfilled.

Confidential nature of supervisory relationship. Supervision has many aspects of confidentiality and should not be subject to "public" scrutiny. Any sharing of the content of supervision should take place only with appropriate administrative staff of the program. Questioning of the worker's job performance should not be made publicly, nor should direct intervention in the worker's performance be undertaken except for an urgent reason, such as the prevention of physical injury. Within the view expressed here, on-the-spot supervision, generally, is not helpful or desirable.

SUPERVISION AS AN INTERPERSONAL PROCESS

Relationship between supervisor and worker. The essence of supervision lies in the relationship that is created between supervisor and worker. Each has a specifically defined role and set of responsibilities that he brings to the relationship, but the supervisor assumes the larger burden for making the supervisory relationship fruitful and productive.

Supervision is partly a matter of knowledge and skills; it is also an art. A primary consideration in supervision is to set up conditions that produce and nurture creativity, that encourage the free but responsible expression of ideas, that allow workers to question, disagree, and defend their own points of view, and that permit them to take calculated chances. The supervisor is obligated to set up conditions in which the worker can be creative, releasing the strengths and potentials he possesses. Simultaneously, the supervisor must be creative in his own practice.

Supportive role of supervisor. The staff of the center is composed of persons with a variety of backgrounds who may have differing attitudes, values and standards, education, experiences, motivations, competences, abilities, and work and cognitive styles. Each worker brings his differences to the job, but each can make a significant contribution consistent with the aims of the center.

There is, in general, no one right approach, style, or method for working with people; agreed-upon goals can be achieved in a variety of ways. The task of the supervisor is to enable and encourage the worker to conceive of a range of possibilities and purposefully to choose among them an approach consistent with his personal style and the needs of the program. Supervision then must assist and support him, playing to his strengths and according to his individual needs, helping him to make the best use of his knowledge and skills and to develop new ones. By so doing, supervision provides the means for professional development of the worker, increasing his satisfaction and his ability to serve the center.

Need for objectivity. Supervision must be job-related; personal friendships must not interfere with the aim of getting the work of the agency done. In this respect, both worker and supervisor are obligated to raise questions, including difficult questions, with honesty and forthrightness but at the same time with sensitivity, understanding, and integrity. The supervisor need not be timid about confronting the worker with painful issues; he is obligated to do so, providing the supervisory relationship is based upon mutual respect.

Authority of supervisor. Authority clearly resides in the position that the supervisor holds, but this authority is validated by the demonstrated competence of the supervisor. The supervisor should strive to be respected, not necessarily to be liked. Neither supervisor nor worker should hold the illusion that powerful sanctions do not reside in positions of authority. However, this does not prevent the relationship from being comfortable and mutually satisfying and productive.

Conflicts between worker and supervisor. Conflicts, stresses, and strains can and do arise, even in the soundest of supervisory relationships. The supervisor is responsible for attempting to resolve these and for protecting the interests of both the worker and agency. It is possible that such resolutions cannot be effected and alternative courses of action are necessary.

In some cases, the worker may be reassigned to other job responsibilities or may be transferred to another supervisor. In either case, this should be carried out without prejudice to the worker. Or it may be that no alternatives are possible, in which case the worker's association with the center must be terminated. However, if the supervisory practice has been sound and competent, such termination can be accomplished with dignity.

Emotional aspects. The demands of the job at times will arouse a variety of feelings in the worker. When these feelings are negative, they must be dealt with or they may obstruct the ability of the worker to perform his job acceptably. Relieving the pressure of the demands on the worker or helping him gain insight into the meaning of his feelings and behavior may result in relief and better productivity. The supervisor, however, is not a therapist and must not engage in clinical treatment nor reveal to the worker his own personal problems for the sake of the relationship. The supervisor should also recognize that he is subject to pressures and feelings himself and must find means for relieving them so they do not adversely affect his performance and as a consequence damage the supervisory relationship. Projection by either the supervisor or the worker of anger, hostility, or frustration onto the other is destructive.

Throughout the relationship care should be taken to maintain the individuality of both worker and supervisor. The worker should not be encouraged to become overly dependent upon the supervisor, although this is normal and is to be expected in the beginning stages. Nor should he overidentify with the supervisor, molding himself into a secondhand replica. Conversely, the supervisor needs to guard against molding the worker in his own image or keeping the worker in a dependent position to gratify personal needs or to maintain authoritarian control.

Evaluation. Supervision involves an evaluation of the worker's job performance. This evaluation should be appropriately and clearly shared with the worker in each conference. He should be legitimately praised or critically questioned as the circumstances indicate. At the end of each conference, the worker should know exactly where he stands in terms of what he has mastered, where he can improve, and into what area he is to move next. If supervision has been sound, the worker at any given time should be able to write a self-evaluation that essentially coincides with the one written by the supervisor. If supervision has been effective, the worker should move toward greater independence and self-sufficiency, his increasing competence allowing him to assume greater responsibility.

Each worker is entitled to have periodic written evaluations of his work, usually at the end of his probationary period and every year thereafter. It is desirable that the worker sign the evaluation to indicate his agreement with it. If there are points of disagreement that cannot be resolved, the worker is entitled to have his disagreements attached to the evaluation and made part of his personnel file.

Chapter IV

RECRUITMENT OF PARENTS

The efforts of Project Head Start to form a truly meaningful partnership with parents varies in intensity from neighborhood to neighborhood. Very often an immediately positive response from parents reflects careful interpretation of the program before it gets under way and early involvement of parents and others in the neighborhood during its planning stages. Experiences in different communities vary. In some instances, parents come forth readily and show a great deal of interest in participation; in others, parents send their children to Head Start classes but show limited willingness to become involved themselves in program activities. One-hundred-percent cooperation of parents is rare.

Many Head Start programs begin their work with an interested "core group" of parents. This nucleus expands and becomes a major force for attracting other parents.

This chapter provides some aids to Head Start staff members as they reach out to engage the interest and participation of those parents beyond the core group. The involvement of these parents is important to the success of the program with children and their families; the contributions that they make and the benefits that they and their families derive can be immeasurable.

Parents participate, and move toward deep involvement, in many ways and on a variety of levels. Some parents can give quite a bit of time to activities. Other parents must limit their participation because of the pressures of home, job, and other concerns. Efforts to recruit parents should take into account the realities of these pressures on many parents. No attempt should be made to coerce parents to participation. Rather, in addition to the efforts of staff and volunteers to "bring them in," the activities and services provided in the program should be genuinely responsive to the needs and interests of the parents. Recruitment, then, becomes a means of welcoming them and initiating their participation.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The recruitment of parents for participation in Project Head Start begins when the child is recruited for the Head Start program.
2. Recruitment of parents is based on the assumption that parental involvement is essential to a successful Head Start program.
3. All Head Start staff should participate in the planning of recruitment procedures. Although major responsibility for recruitment will be assigned to particular staff members, every staff member should be sensitive to opportunities for the involvement of parents in the ongoing program.

THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Eligible parents. Any parent, or parent substitute, of a child enrolled in the Head Start center is eligible to participate in the parent program.

Early encounters. Any early encounter with a parent should be viewed as an opportunity for establishing a relationship between the parent and center. The ability of the staff member to promote interest in the Head Start program initially is important, since further involvement will grow out of this.

During the enrollment of a child, the staff member should use every opportunity to develop relationships with the parents. These efforts can take place when a parent brings a child to the center for registration, through telephone conversations garnered from lists of already registered children, through group meetings held at the center for purposes of interpretation, or in an "open house" or some other such event. In these early stages the recruiter can utilize the parent's interest in the child to create an interest in the parent program.

The recruitment interview. At the recruitment interview, the step that follows an early encounter, the recruiter and parent now discuss fully the parent program in Project Head Start and the opportunities available for parent involvement. The time and place of the interview may be set with the parent during the first encounter. The recruiter can decide at that time whether the parent should be interviewed alone or with others in a group. If the parent is shy or reticent, for example, an individual interview may be indicated.

If possible, the interview should be held in a place that is free from interruptions and that provides a relaxed atmosphere. The individual or group interview may take place in the child development center, in an empty classroom in the school, over coffee in a neighborhood restaurant, or in some other setting that is convenient and appropriate for both parent(s) and recruiter. Some interviews, particularly individual interviews, may take place in the family home, although the worker should be aware that the range of interruptions in the home may be extensive and not within the control of parent or recruiter -- the demands of children, the phone and doorbell that must be answered, and the chance visitor may interfere with the flow of the interview. When this happens, the "wise" interviewer moves with the flow of events, and in a relaxed way still attempts to cover all of the content.

The timing of the interview can be crucial. Where possible, the convenience of the parent should be given first consideration. The recruiter should obviously avoid scheduling the interview during mealtimes, after school hours when the children have just returned home, or in the early morning. The parent should be consulted about the best time for the interview. These considerations about time should obtain whether the recruitment interview is held in the child development center, the home, or another designated place. If the interview involves a group of parents, the recruiter should check with each parent before a firm time is set.

In the interview, the recruiter should describe the opportunities available to the parents, and parents should be encouraged to ask questions and to discuss the program. By the same token, the recruiter can set parent programs ahead by encouraging parents to describe what they are interested in doing and by accepting their suggestions as to the kinds of programs in which they would like to participate. Parent programs can and should emerge from the interests of the parents themselves, and clues to these interests may be picked up in interviews geared toward interesting parents in participation.

Identifying credentials. As part of the introductory process the recruiter should identify himself and his role in the center. The recruiter should have official credentials, and these credentials should be shown to the parent whether they are asked for or not. A simple card carrying the Head Start emblem, the name and address of the center, a statement indicating that the individual is an official recruiter for Head Start and a place for the signature of the recruiter is all that is required.

Printed materials about the program. Colorful and eye-catching brochures, flyers, or written materials are very useful, especially those with pictures. These materials should describe briefly and clearly the Head Start program for parents and some of the opportunities for participation.

Completion of forms and reports. Reports of the content of interviews with parents can be helpful to the teacher, the nurse, the community worker, and any other staff member involved directly with families. Completing long and complicated forms during the interview itself should be avoided, but sufficient time should be allotted to the recruiter to prepare records and reports after the first encounters and subsequent interviews with parents.

Recruitment forms should be simple in format and limited in number. During an interview the recruiter should focus on the parent, not on filling in a form. When notes must be taken, the recruiter should carefully explain to the parent what is being written and how it will be used. Additional information can be added to the forms later.

The procedure for sharing with other staff members information gained from such interviews should be carefully developed and the means of distribution clearly understood by all recruiters.

Follow-up to the recruitment interview. Parents do not always respond to early efforts at recruitment. The recruiter must recognize that it may be necessary to return several times to the same parent before interest in participation is generated. Follow-up may take the form of a personal visit, a telephone contact, a written note to the parent (sometimes sent by the child), contact via another parent (who may be asked to encourage the attendance of the reluctant parent), and special efforts, such as group meetings to which parents may be invited. Head Start parents who are deriving satisfaction from the program often assist in these follow-up efforts with marked success.

Door-to-door canvassing. Where lists of eligible families are not available from the center itself or from welfare agencies, churches, or public schools, recruiters may find it necessary to engage in door-to-door canvassing. This method of recruitment presents special opportunities and special problems. If the child and parent are being recruited at the same time, plenty of time should be allowed for the establishment of eligibility, the description of the program for both children and parents, and the exploration with the parent of all areas of the Head Start program. In large urban centers the recruiter may find that some families are reluctant to open their doors to strangers. In rural areas this procedure is often impractical because of the wide geographic areas to be covered. Some programs have found door-to-door canvassing useful, however.

In a racially tense area, for example:

> . . . white children are attending Head Start in Negro churches alongside Negro children. These are the results of intense house-to-house recruitment designed to seek out white families and sell them on the program. Stressing the medical, educational, (and) nutritional aspects of the program, the recruiter must make clear where the program is to be held, that it is designed to serve children of all races, and that other children of the parents' race have agreed to attend.(1)

A recruitment team can sometimes be helpful in bridging the gap between the center and the community. One member of such a team might be a parent who lives in the community; another member might be an experienced community worker. These recruiters will bring to the task particular insights and understandings helpful in shortening the span between the first encounter with parents and their eventual involvement. This is particularly true when the prevailing language spoken in the community is not English. Bilingual recruiters will at times be necessary and may become members of a recruitment team. A recruitment team should consist of only two or three persons so that the family is not overwhelmed by the number of people coming into their home.

Publicity and promotion. Attractive posters giving pertinent facts about Head Start and its programs for children and parents may be distributed in local shops, supermarkets, and other places in the neighborhood that are frequented by parents. These posters should be colorful and eye-catching and contain photographs when possible. In this connection, the quality and composition of publicity photographs and other graphics are extremely important, and they should be carefully selected and used.

Newspaper articles and radio and television tracers have been effective recruitment aids in some communities.

Unless supported by direct personal contact, however, this kind of publicity is likely to produce limited results, as the following case example of an attempt to set up a parent discussion group in a public housing project illustrates:

> I had discussed the setting up of the current group early in July with the project management. When we attempted to identify the most appropriate method of recruitment, Mr. C., Housing Manager, suggested that perhaps a flyer would be the most effective vehicle in publicizing . . . such a group. In addition to this, there would be some reference made in the project newsletter.
>
> After sending out approximately 1,500 flyers, we discovered a day prior to the parents' meeting that there were only six responses. We then reviewed with the housing staff ways in which we might be able to involve more parents. . . . I was referred to one of the mothers who might be instrumental in contacting other parents. . . .
>
> Mrs. Rita Z. has had vast community experience as a former president of the tenant's association and (is) involved in numerous groups. I

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1. Olga Boikess and Jack Gonzales, "Clichés and Recruiting." Head Start Newsletter, Special Issue, 1967.

discussed the recruitment problem with her. She took the position that it was rather late, although she agreed to make a few telephone calls. We later agreed to wait until after the first meeting to plan further recruitment strategies.(2)

ADDRESSING THE INDIVIDUAL CONCERNS OF PARENTS

In the course of an encounter, the parent is likely to raise -- implicitly or explicitly -- matters that are of immediate concern to him, such as problems related to money, housing inadequacies, health, etc. When these concerns emerge during the recruitment interview, the recruiter should make every reasonable effort to assist the parent in handling them. He might, for example, refer the parent to the professional social worker at the center or to some public or private agency for the specific help needed. In other cases, telling the parent about resources in the community may be sufficient. In assisting the parent in these ways, the recruiter displays interest in him and demonstrates the willingness of Head Start to be helpful.

ASSIGNING MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY FOR RECRUITMENT

Appropriate attitudes, skills, and knowledge are basic to a competent recruiter. Personal qualities are also important, since the recruiter is responsible for building relationships. Those who hold positive attitudes toward parent participation are likely to be more successful in engaging the interest of parents and therefore more useful as recruiters than are those whose feelings toward such involvement are ambivalent or negative.

All recruiters should be properly trained and supervised. The roles that they are assigned to carry should vary with their skills, their knowledge, and the amount of time they can devote to this important procedure. One or more Head Start staff members should be assigned the major responsibility for recruitment. This assignment should include duties related to building and training a corps of recruiters, supervising their work, correlating records, and following up on early efforts.

Parents of Head Start Children can be effective staff or volunteer recruiters. Those who live in the community tend to be familiar with its strengths and its problems and also may have ready access to other parents. If the recruiter is a parent already pleased with the program and respected by other parents, he can be especially effective.

PROBLEM AREAS FREQUENTLY ENCOUNTERED

Insufficient staff resources. The center should allocate adequate recruiters, space, and time for planning and implementing the recruitment effort. Failure to provide these resources weakens the outreach of the recruitment effort and limits the number of parents and children enrolled in the program.

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2. This example is taken from the case records of Project ENABLE.

Barriers to effective communication. Some recruiters have difficulty in communicating with parents, particularly in early encounters. This difficulty sometimes results from the recruiter's:

1. Negative attitudes held toward and about families in circumstances of poverty and toward parental participation in the education of the young child.
2. Lack of familiarity with the meanings of verbal expressions and nonverbal behavior of people in the community
3. Ignorance of the problems confronting families and communities in circumstances of poverty

Lack of response. Parents do not always show enthusiasm at the prospect of becoming involved in the center program. In some cases, this cool response may be the result of a history of experience with programs and institutions that were designed theoretically to "help" them, but which in practice served to dehumanize and disillusion them. In other instances, parents may be overwhelmed with problems and lack the interest or energy to further extend themselves.

All-important in dealing with a parent's negative attitudes is listening to what the parent has to say. The recruiter should not attempt to criticize the parent's assessment of his own experience. Rather, he should point up ways in which the parent program in Head Start will be different and beneficial.

The recruitment of males. Special events can be scheduled to bring men together for purposes of recruitment. These events can be either social, such as a "fathers' night," with special events of interest to men, or task-oriented, such as building and repairing furniture for the Head Start center. Such gatherings should be viewed as techniques or devices for engaging initial interest. Participation in the program should not be interpreted as remaining at this level. Men have been found to respond favorably to opportunities for participation at policy-making levels within the parent advisory structure of Head Start. They can be recruited individually and directly for such involvement.

Where the man is accessible in the home, the recruiter should try to arrange at least one recruitment interview at a time when both parents can be present in order to demonstrate Head Start's interest in the involvement of both.

It has been noted, in many programs, that male recruiters experience greater success in eliciting and holding the interest of other males in Head Start programs.

Chapter V

WORK WITH GROUPS

A group may be defined as two or more persons in interaction with each other. It may also be termed a social subsystem (part of a larger social system) with formal and informal structures that are essential for the achievement of that subsystem's purposes and goals.

In Project Head Start, the use of groups -- large and small, long-term and short-term -- has been viewed as an important means for reaching individuals and families in low-income communities. Group experiences of many kinds are useful in engaging the interest of parents, in involving them in meaningful ways in the educational experiences of their children, and in helping to increase their capacities as parents and as active participants in community life.

There is purpose and direction, therefore, in Head Start's interest in the utilization of groups, and group experiences have been particularly relevant in the development of parent programs. This purpose and direction has made necessary an increased understanding by leadership of the nature of groups, how they function, and how they are developed and maintained.

Certain characteristics are common to all groups. Unless these characteristics exist, a gathering of people may not properly be labeled a group. A group will have: purposes and goals, bond, structure, subgroups, and social processes.

The brief explanations of these characteristics that follow should help the staff member readily identify the existence of a group.

GENERAL CONCEPTS

Purposes and Goals

In order for a collection of people to become a group, common purposes and goals for their coming together must exist. The purposes (reasons) that bring them together and the goals (aims) toward which they will strive are not always clear to the members in the beginning. But they must become explicit and accepted if the life of the group is to have direction and meaning.

These purposes and goals may be formulated by the members themselves. In other cases, Head Start will state the purposes and goals and bring members together for their achievement. In all cases, a merging of both interests -- that of the members and that of Head Start -- must take place if the group is to develop and make a contribution to parents and to the program. The purposes of the group members and the purposes of Head Start must not be in conflict; they may not be the same at every point, but must be so in the main. The same would be true in relation to agreement on the matter of group goals.

Group purposes and goals may be generally classified as (1) task-directed and (2) social-emotional. These distinctions cannot always be rigidly drawn. A task-directed group will have social-emotional components, although the tasks take predominance over the social aspects. The reverse may also be true -- the social-emotional group will have task-directed components, although the main focus is on the social aspects.

Task-directed groups. The purposes and goals of these groups are directed toward the performance of certain tasks: making decisions, learning a skill, planning an event, or performing a needed task. Their purpose for existing is the task; the performance of the task represents the goal.

Social-emotional groups. The purposes and goals of social-emotional groups are primarily directed toward the enhancement of feelings of neighborliness, friendship, good will, sharing, cooperation, and social interaction. Emphasis is placed on the development of social interaction among the members.

Group Bond

Group bond is the attraction that exists between individual members and the group. The members appreciate and enjoy the group experience and so come to meetings; or they like each other and the group provides a medium for coming together. The merging of these components of attraction results in the formation, cohesion, and maintenance of the group and may be termed group bond. Without this bond, the members will not remain together as a group.

In some cases, the attraction of the group for its members may be the tasks to be done. In other cases, the social-emotional aspects of group life may represent the attraction that lies at the core of the bond.

Group Structures

There are two kinds of group structure: (1) that formed by interpersonal relationships and (2) that based on fulfilling a certain task or tasks.

> Interpersonal relationships. The quality of the social-emotional aspect of group life depends on the pattern of interpersonal relationships that exists: member to member, member to total group, to subgroups, and to the leaders.
>
> When the health and vitality of this pattern of relationships is sound, the members relate well to each other, the conflict level of the group is low, and the enjoyment of being together is evident through conversational exchanges, cooperative endeavors, and group enthusiasm.
>
> If the pattern of relationships is weak, members tend toward isolation or toward the development of competing cliques that are destructive to group bond.
>
> Task structure. This type of structure tends to be more formal and easily understood than the interpersonal relationships type. It may be established by the members for purposes of assigning tasks and working to complete these tasks. In the development of the task structure, officers

may be elected or appointed, various jobs are assigned to members of subgroups, and group leaders provide direction, stimulus, and recognition for the responsibilities that are undertaken by the members.

Many variations in task structures are possible. A structure may be formally established, as suggested above, with leaders (officers) who serve and fulfill prescribed roles on a long-term basis. Or, it may be informal, with leaders serving on a temporary basis until given tasks are completed.

Both kinds of structures -- interpersonal relationships and task orientation -- coexist in the same group whether group purposes and goals are social-emotional or task-directed. However, the purposes and goals of the group determine, by and large, which of the structures will be of primary importance.

Subgroups

It is usual for members of groups to divide themselves into subgroups of two or three persons. These subgroups provide intensive social and emotional nourishment for individual members and are useful in group task achievement.

The wise leader seeks to utilize these subgroups constructively in behalf of the total group. He will provide opportunities for subgroup members to merge with other subgroups and sometimes form entirely new subgroupings. This kind of manipulation is entirely consistent with the leader's role in the guidance of group process.

When a member tends to isolate himself and does not relate -- or is not related -- to one or more subgroups, he should receive special attention from the leader(s). A failure to relate to others may occur because the member is a newcomer and not acquainted with others. Or he may feel unwelcome or not needed in the group. The leader should attempt to structure opportunities for this member to relate purposefully to others, without creating conditions of embarrassment or dismay in either the isolated person or the other members.

Group Social Processes

Social processes are common to the life of all groups:

1. There is interaction between the members.
2. The group experiences development.
3. The group undergoes change.

The major task of the group leader(s) is to direct these social processes so that the group goals are achieved and individual members, as well as the total group, are enriched by their participation. When this happens, the group and its individual members develop self-confidence, new knowledge about themselves and others (including other groups), and increased competence. They are then better equipped to interact with other groups both within Head Start and in the community.

THE LEADERSHIP ROLE

The Member-Leader

Leadership can emerge from the membership of a group to meet special needs of the group at any given time. Such leaders may maintain their authority and position over a period of time with the agreement of other members, or they may contribute briefly and retire until the needs of the group necessitate their return to leadership. Such members demonstrate the potential resident in every group for the development of a significant corps of leaders.

Other members bring with them to the group a background of experience in leadership that they willingly, and sometimes aggressively, offer in service.

Still others may have a potential for leadership that is not revealed until they have been encouraged and even nudged to assume special tasks. These tasks, carried out with responsibility and dedication, provide clues to their hidden gifts.

Parents in Head Start programs should be encouraged and supported in their movements toward the assumption of leadership roles and responsibilities. Efforts must be made to locate leaders and then to provide creative opportunities for their development and utilization.

Leadership roles that may have to be carried by Head Start staff in the early stages of group formation and development should be released to member-leaders as rapidly as these members are willing and ready to assume them.

The methods and techniques of leadership must be taught and members should be encouraged to use them. Ever-widening experiences should be provided in order that member-leaders can develop skill and competence in identifying and coming to grips with problems in their own families, neighborhoods, and the broader community.

The staff member should be careful not to promote dependency of the members on him. Rather, they should be encouraged to "learn by doing" and take advantage of their opportunities to plan, take action, and evaluate their performance independently.

The Staff Leader

Head Start staff, professional and nonprofessional, are not members of the groups for which they provide services; this is true even when the staff member is himself the parent of a child in a Head Start class. The distinction is in the roles of the staff as differentiated from those of the group members.

The staff member works with the group in a collaborative and democratic manner. He carries different roles at different times, and the nature of these roles is determined by the kind of group, its purposes and goals, the prior group experiences of its members, and the nature of the leader's specific work assignment. He may, upon need, fulfill the following roles (among others): enabler, advisor, supporter, expert, teacher, resource person, planner, helper. He is a participant in a team relationship and a worker who sometimes, often unfortunately, must work alone. He never usurps the role of a member but is willing to release to the members appropriate roles that he may be carrying himself.

He should bring to bear, in fulfillment of his tasks, a body of knowledge and information, sound attitudes, and a repertoire of skills and techniques relevant to working with individuals and groups. His own goals should reflect an amalgam of personal commitment and direction, Head Start purposes and goals, and those of the individuals and groups with whom he is allied. With full understanding that continued study and sharpened insights into the nature of groups and their members are required for his professional development and continued competence in his work, he should pursue opportunities for training and for further education.

The Volunteer

The volunteer in the group may perform specified tasks, thereby releasing members and staff advisors for the pursuit of other tasks or goals. Volunteers perform valuable services as resources, as experts on various subjects, as teachers -- often on a short-term basis -- and as helpers. They may also serve as advisors to groups. When they serve in these roles, they are not members of the group.

Volunteers must be prepared for the tasks that they are requested to perform in behalf of groups. They will bring the skills needed to fulfill the specific tasks for which they volunteer, but they must be helped to understand the group in which they volunteer their service, its interests and concerns, purposes, and goals. They should be told, in a general way, about the membership. Important also is the necessity for them to understand how their contributions fit into the total plan for the group.

GROUPS FOR PARENTS IN PROJECT HEAD START

The remaining sections in this chapter discuss, in some detail, four different kinds of groups that are common to local Head Start programs: 1) social groups, 2) educational groups, 3) policy-making bodies, and 4) parent discussion groups.

The reader should apply the general concepts discussed above to his study of these four kinds of groups.

SOCIAL GROUPS

Many useful and contributing parent groups in Project Head Start had their beginnings as social groups. Parents in low-income communities often do not have an opportunity to join with others in group situations where their own personal enjoyment is the major focus. Therefore, though such groups may expand their purposes and goals, this aspect of sociability should be retained and reinforced, when possible.

Social groups are those in which the major focus is upon the social-emotional aspects of interpersonal relationships between members. Persons come together for the sheer enjoyment of each other; for the opportunity to be together in the planning and execution of group tasks directed primarily toward personal and family recreation and leisure needs; for the opportunity to meet others in simply structured settings; and for opportunities to share with their peers in what may be a problem-free situation. The formal structure of such groups is simple. Group tasks tend to be less complex than may be true in other kinds of groups, and the degree of interaction between the members is usually at a very high level.

These groups are of great importance in programs for parent involvement. Social relationships are a very essential part of living. Good relationships contribute to sound mental health and are the basis of effective family and community living. Parents who enjoy social experiences at a peer level are reinforced in their abilities to "give" happiness and joy to their children, because they are experiencing it in their own lives. They are able to sharpen their social skills, such as cooperation with others, leadership and followership, social graces, and the further development of desirable social attitudes (friendliness, acceptance of differences, and responsibility toward others).

The early period of group formation may involve "get acquainted" aspects, because many or all of the members may be strangers. This period may also include a high degree of volatility in participation as new members test the group for its value to them and as decisions are made regarding dates, timing, and place of meetings. As the group develops bond, these issues become submerged into the routines of group life; newcomers are welcomed and the membership becomes stabilized.

Forming a Social Group

Social groups may begin in the following ways (among others):

1. Members are recruited to participate in planning and carrying out a particular recreational event for Head Start. These ad hoc members may decide to continue as a group, as the following example illustrates:

> Mrs. Comacho agreed to act as chairman for a small group of mothers and fathers who would plan a "Family Day Picnic" for children in our Head Start Center. Seven parents, five mothers and two fathers, attended the first meeting.
>
> The picnic was a big success. Fifteen parents and thirty-five children attended. Each mother prepared her special dish. The

six fathers who attended were responsible for transportation, playing games with the children, and helping to maintain general safety in the area of the wading pool. We all agreed that the adults had as much fun as the children.

> At the end of the day, the mothers and fathers agreed to meet together on Friday of the coming week in the Center to decide what events could be planned for the future.(1)

2. A few parents may express an interest in organizing a social group. These interested parents may take responsibility for further recruitment and subsequent development of the group:

> Mrs. Carlyle, Mrs. Fortas, and Mrs. Jones came to me at the close of the sewing class to discuss the possibility of organizing a club of mothers. I said that I thought that this was fine and asked what they wanted to do in the club. They looked at each other and acted as though they hadn't thought about what they would do! Mrs. Fortas said, "Oh, we'll just talk."

3. Groups may emerge as a result of Head Start "coffee hours" for parents; from frequent encounters of parents in the parents' room in the Head Start center; as a result of organizing efforts by the community worker; or as an outgrowth of other kinds of experiences within the program that serve to bring parents together.

4. Male parents may plan for regularly scheduled "fathers' night" activities, which provide social outlets for them:

> Mrs. Rojas, a member of the Parent Committee had said that her husband could help us to recruit other fathers for Head Start. She promised to ask him to phone me or to come in for a talk.
>
> I explained to Mr. Rojas our desire to have more men participate in parent programs in the Head Start Center. We talked about the importance of having fathers understand about the program that the children were in and about the helps that the fathers could give to the children to encourage them, and to Head Start itself. Mr. Rojas asked what kinds of things the fathers would be expected to do in Head Start. I said that they (the fathers) could suggest what they would like to do and suggested that Mr. Rojas get some fathers together and we would talk with them.
>
> Mr. Rojas suggested that we plan an evening for fathers and while they were having a pleasant time, he would talk with them. We settled on a Friday night two weeks later for the "Fathers' Night." I secured permission to use the school gym and swimming pool for a three-hour period.
>
> I tried to help Mr. Rojas, but he said that he did not need any help. "Just tell me what you want and I will do it," he would

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1. This and the following examples in this discussion of social groups are drawn from the case records of various Head Start programs. Names are fictitious.

say. I was very nervous about his progress and tried to prepare him not to be disappointed if only two or three fathers appeared.

As the days passed, Mr. Rojas appeared with checkerboards, playing cards, and other games for the "Night." He did not seem too concerned about attendance.

The Friday night of the event was very dismal and cold. Thirty-eight fathers came and spent two or more hours swimming, playing checkers and cards, and talking together. Near the end of the evening Mr. Rojas told them what I had told him about the importance of fathers in the program.

They were interested. Mr. Rojas asked them to think about it. He asked if they wanted another evening "like this one." They heartily agreed.

Provision for Child Care

It should be noted that the care of young children may pose problems for parents who participate. It is not uncommon for some social groups to welcome the attendance of children with their parents. Other groups may need the services of a sitter at the place of the meeting; this may require the special attention of the staff in making adequate child-care arrangements.

Limitations on Membership

After a social group develops bond, it is not unusual for its members to wish to close its membership to outsiders. Issues of "open" versus "closed" memberships, particularly in relation to social groupings, hold the potential for divisive feelings among the total parent group. Staff members should seek to provide experiences that promote an atmosphere of acceptance, as opposed to rejection, among parents. Therefore, this aspect of group life should be carefully discussed and handled with the group. Most groups limit the size of their memberships, primarily because the small group can provide so many gains for the individual member. Perhaps limitations on the size of the group should be explored with the members before group bond is fully consolidated.

Leadership

Leadership in a social group generally emerges from among the members. The persons who assume these leadership roles may be termed member-leaders. Within a formal structure they may be the president or chairman, secretary, treasurer, etc. Leadership may be provided by other member-leaders on an ad hoc, or temporary, basis.

The Staff Advisor. The staff member assigned to a social group functions, as in other groups, in a variety of roles. He should help member-leaders carry their roles with increasing confidence and competence. Chiefly, this staff member -- who may be an aide or volunteer -- should direct his energy toward enabling the group to achieve its purposes and goals. The staff advisor functions, interchangeably, as an enabler, an interpreter of program policies and procedures, a supporter, a teacher, and a resource person. The advisor also provides connections and channels of communication between the group and other parent groups, and between the group and the total program.

While the importance of, and need for, growth of the group and its members will be uppermost in his mind, the staff advisor must not pressure for such growth. Constantly assessing the readiness of the group for broader experience and outreach, the staff advisor should contribute to the member-leaders' recognition of these areas of readiness through help in conferences and informal sessions. Thereby, he affirms that for Head Start the social group is not an end in itself.

Development of the Group

As is true in any other Head Start parent group, the staff goals for a social group are directed toward the enrichment of parent, family, and community relationships. This does not preclude group goals of the same kind. However, importance is placed on enabling member-leaders to direct the group toward the achievement of its expressed purposes and goals. In the process, the outreach of the group should be broadened, its leadership strengthened, and the content of group life enriched.

Problem Areas Frequently Encountered

Stagnation. When a group becomes stagnant, members no longer identify areas of interest that they hold in common. Or they may tend to pursue one area of interest beyond its ability to involve them.

In this instance, the likelihood is that the core members have dispersed, leaving the group without its most stable members. One of the roles of core members is to inspire, interpret common goals, and maintain interest of members. If this core membership can be reactivated, the group may again be enlivened.

Leadership difficulties. Difficulties may occur because the social group was viewed as one that needed complex formal organization, with many officers, before the group was ready to accept and use such a structure and organization and before the members had been helped to understand the leadership roles that they needed to assume. The resulting discouragement and sense of failure are reflected in the behavior and responses of group members.

Leadership difficulties may also occur if the staff advisor talks too much and attempts to tell members what to do instead of allowing interest in "doing" to emerge and blossom.

Inconvenient meeting days and hours. The dates and hours for meetings of these groups should be set at the convenience of the members. This may not always be possible if the group must utilize the facilities of the child development center and take into account the space demands there. However, the personal convenience of the staff should not become a determinant in such decisions; emphasis must be placed upon the time needs of the parents.

Difficulties in finding a place to meet. It should be noted that a member's home is not always the best place for the meeting of a social group. When homes are used for meetings, parents who are not able, by choice or because of home conditions, to entertain are sometimes "put on the spot." The matter of selection and decision, in this regard, must be thoughtfully and sensitively handled with full regard for the feelings of all concerned.

If the child development center can provide meeting facilities for parents, this may be a most acceptable alternative to meetings held in the homes of members.

Refreshments. Money should be made available in the budget of the Head Start center for work with parents. A portion of these financial resources could be used to provide refreshments for groups so that this factor does not become a burden upon members.

EDUCATIONAL GROUPS

Most of the experiences provided in the programs of parent involvement in Project Head Start have educational components. However, some groups are established for the specific purpose of parent education. Such groups prepare parents for a wide range of tasks for which they require particular knowledges and skills, teach new methods for the handling of limited resources, and help parents to adjust to the pressures of daily living in urban and rural community life. Parent education is helpful in introducing methods of home maintenance and child care that tend to reduce the struggles in a parent's trial-and-error approaches.

Educational groups have many components that are similar to groups established for purposes of training. For example, a clear statement of the educational purpose and objectives toward which the group experience is directed must be established. The educational content must be specified and structured; the educational leaders (teachers) must be selected, and a plan for the teaching of educational content that incorporates methodology and logistical arrangements (dates, time, space, etc.) agreed upon.

Educational groups provide opportunities for the involvement of parents of Head Start children at many levels: parents may be involved as employed staff of child development centers in preparation for leadership roles in other educational, social, and community action groups; they may share as member-learners under the leadership of other staff or volunteers; they may participate as resource persons under the direction of other teacher-instructor-leaders; and they may act as interpreters and promoters of participation in these groups for other parents.

It is important to note that the most successful educational groups are those in which the member-learners participate from the planning stage through the evaluation stage. Such participation can be creatively structured from the beginning since individuals support activities and groups that they have had a share in planning and for which they feel responsible.

Educational groups require careful preparation and constant evaluation and support from the staff if they are to fulfill their purposes and objectives. Well-planned group education experiences, given the encouragement and supports needed for their development and continuance, can be a significant force in the enrichment of the lives of children, their families, and their communities.

Guiding Principles

1. Educational groups are structured and task-oriented. They are time-limited, with the number of meetings in the series carefully delineated.
2. The educational leader (teacher), whether professional staff member or volunteer, should be an expert in the area of study.
3. The purposes and goals of the educational group are related to the content of the educational experience. Group members may help to determine these purposes and goals and the specific content, but sometimes these are predetermined by Head Start advisory bodies together with administrative staff.

4. Continuity in educational content must be provided in these groups. The educational groups are scheduled on a session basis. A means for carry-over of content from session to session must be incorporated so that each session is related to both the preceding and subsequent sessions.
5. A format for evaluation is essential. The plan for evaluation should provide an opportunity for leadership, group members, and other appropriate persons to measure the usefulness of the experience to members and the achievement of purposes and goals.

Examples of Educational Groups

Training groups for classroom observation and participation. These groups help parents understand the educational process in which the child is involved. The parent can also be assisted in acquiring the skills needed for meaningful participation in the classroom. Teachers and program directors often provide leadership for these groups.

Leadership development groups. These groups assist parents who have been elected leaders of committees and councils to carry out their duties competently. Educational content can include such subjects as: presiding over a meeting, taking minutes, parliamentary procedures, roles and responsibilities of elected officers.

These groups may also teach such content as: how one writes letters to public officials, the planning of public meetings, public speaking, and other leadership needs that parents themselves identify.

Language classes. Communities with large populations of non-English-speaking citizens have provided language classes that have proved of great worth to Head Start parents. English-speaking parents have also joined such groups and acquired a second language. Community life has thereby been enriched, because new channels of communication have been opened between groups of parents to whom language had been a barrier.

Basic educational groups. Unfortunately, large numbers of parents have been identified who might be termed functional illiterates. Because of the concern of Head Start for the needs of these parents, and because the children of these parents would receive major benefits from the educational development of their mothers and fathers, basic education groups have been formed. These groups are often developed and continued through a collaborative arrangement with boards of education.

Parents in this category have, in addition to other gains, learned to read and write. They have also learned to write checks, complete essential governmental forms, and write letters.

Nutrition groups. These groups sometime begin as classes in the preparation and use of surplus foods. Members progress to learning more about the importance of good nutrition for the family, the planning of balanced meals on small budgets, consumer buying information -- and eventually to the formation of consumer groups or clubs.

These kinds of groups show greater progress when the educational leader recognizes and shows appreciation for the food preferences of the parents. Such preferences are often ethnically or culturally based.

Health groups. Parents often show interest in groups that are concerned with matters of health. The focus of such groups may be determined by the major health concerns identified in the health component of Head Start, by the expressed interests of the parents, and by major areas of concern in the community.

Classes in "first aid in the home" have been well received in some communities, particularly in areas that lack community medical facilities.

Education for citizen action groups. Groups have also been established to assist parents to participate in parent-teacher conferences, to deal with concerns about public welfare issues, and to address their concerns as citizens.

Problem Areas Frequently Encountered

Attrition of membership. Following the first meeting of the group, members gradually withdraw, until almost none remain, and the group disperses.

The group may fail to develop bond; that is, members fail to develop an attraction for the group and for each other, and a core group of stable members may fail to form and sustain the group. This may happen when the members have not had sufficient interpretation, prior to enrolling, about the subject content for the focus of the group. Family problems, difficulties about child care during meeting hours, lack of sensitivity and understanding on the part of the educational leader, and uninteresting sessions are some of the failings that contribute to group attrition.

If the group experience is drawn out over too long a period of time (too many sessions), members may tend to drop out of the group.

Lack of interest in subject matter. The subject matter may not be relevant to the needs and interests of the participants.

Poor group relationships. Interpersonal relationships, if poorly developed, may tend to obstruct the teaching and learning experience.

POLICY-MAKING BODIES: PARENT GROUP COMMITTEES, POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEES, AND ADVISORY COUNCILS

Guiding Principles

1. Policy-making groups in Head Start are distinguished from other kinds of program groups by their functions as policy-makers in the planning and implementation of Head Start procedures and practices.
2. Participation and involvement in policy-making groups provides parents with an opportunity to influence program and administrative decisions that may affect their lives and the lives of their children.
3. Leadership of policy-making groups is democratically chosen by each group from its membership. The Head Start staff relates to the group and its leadership in advisory capacities.
4. The policy-making group is usually task-directed.

Policy-Making Bodies

The 1967 Head Start Manual of Policies and Instructions states:

> There should be, in every case, a parent committee at the center level. There must also be a Policy Advisory Committee at that administrative level where most decisions are made. Usually this is at the delegate agency level or where there are no delegate agencies, at the Community Action Agency or Single Purpose Agency level. Finally, for those community action agencies which have several delegate agencies, it may be desirable to have a Policy Advisory Council. The groups should generally serve all year round.(2)

The following chart shows the prevailing advisory structure:

Agency Level	Policy-Making Body
Grantee Agency	Policy Advisory Council (50% parents; 50% community representatives)
Delegate Agency	Policy Advisory Committee (50% parents; 50% community representatives)
Head Start Center	Parent Group Committees and other parent groups (100% parents)

Parent Group Committees

Parent group committees function at the level of the individual Head Start center. The organization of parent group committees varies with the center. Some centers develop a parent group committee for each classroom. Each classroom committee then elects representatives to a center parent group committee

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2. Head Start. A Manual of Policies and Instructions. Washington, D.C.: Office of Economic Opportunity, September 1967. p. 10.

which coordinates the operation of the several classroom committees and participates with the staff in determining and implementing policy provisions.

Objectives. The objectives of parent group committees are:

1. To participate in decisions at the center level that affect the programs for both children and parents
2. To participate in the democratic selection of representatives to the policy advisory committee and in the recommendations, through these representatives, of program and policy ideas appropriate to the needs of the individual center and the community that it serves within the framework of the goals and objectives of Project Head Start
3. To develop a pool of adults with leadership and group experience who will remain in the community and assume active roles in the enhancement of community life, in the education of children, youth, and other adults, and in the perfection of the democratic process -- all of this beyond the period during which they are involved in the Head Start program for parents
4. To establish, through its membership, lines of communication between the center and those parents and other community residents who are not actively involved in the parent program

The effective operation of a parent group committee is illustrated by the following example:

> One member of a parent group committee commented that she was uncomfortable during classroom visits, because the teacher's behavior indicated that she "...would just rather not have us (parents) around."
>
> In the discussion that followed, the parents discussed other possible reasons for their reactions of discomfort: (1) they had no way of knowing why certain classroom activities were being conducted; (2) they did not know what to look for in the classroom and with the children, when they attended as observers; (3) they had doubts about the relevance of the questions they asked the teacher; and (4) they were hesitant about offering suggestions for the classroom program because they did not know enough about what was going on.
>
> With the support of the project director and the staff advisor, a series of activities were arranged for parents and teachers: social events, discussions, and a demonstration lesson. Parents grew in their ability to support the objectives of the classroom and teachers grew in their knowledge and appreciation of the parents' concerns for the education of their children and the value of the parents' contributions.(3)

Policy Advisory Committees and Councils

Policy advisory committees and councils function at the levels of the delegate agency and grantee agency, respectively. At least 50 percent of the membership of policy advisory committees and councils must be parents. The balance of the membership is composed of representation from the community-at-large.

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3. From the records of a local Head Start Program.

A community representative is defined in the Head Start Manual as a representative of a community group (public or private) or community professional organization that has a concern for children of the poor and can contribute to the program.

Parents are democratically selected for membership on policy advisory committees and councils. This selection is made at the center level by other parents of Head Start children. Each center or program should be authorized to select a specified number of parent representatives to the policy advisory committee and/or council.

Objectives. The objectives of the policy advisory committees and councils are as follows:(4)

1. To assist in the development of, and give approval to, the application before it is submitted
2. To participate in the selection of the Head Start program director. Decisions on selection of the director should reflect a consensus between the policy advisory committee and the administering agency. The formal appointment action should follow whatever procedures are appropriate in the particular community.
3. To have a voice in establishing criteria for the selection of staff personnel
4. To initiate suggestions and ideas for program improvements
5. To serve as a channel for hearing complaints on the program
6. To assist in organizing activities for parents
7. To assume some degree of responsibility for communicating with parents and encouraging their participation in the program
8. To serve as a link to public and private organizations
9. To represent the professional organizations, public agencies, and parents involved in the program
10. To aid in recruiting volunteers and assist in mobilizing community resources

Since Head Start is an interdisciplinary approach to the education of young children, it is essential that key community figures in education, health, religion, community service, welfare, recreation, and local government share in the determination of program policies. Such members are expected to exert whatever influence they carry in the community on behalf of the Head Start program and serve as liaisons between Project Head Start and other community institutions.

The following example illustrates how two policy advisory committees worked with Head Start and the community to alter a grantee agency's policy decision that affected the Head Start program:

> In one community, the executive committee of the Community Action Agency called a closed meeting, at which they decided on a reallocation of funds. This would have resulted in a decrease in the amount available to Head Start. Two members of the CAA board were representatives selected by policy advisory committees of two Head Start delegate agencies. These representatives were not members of the executive committee.

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4. Head Start. A Manual of Policies and Instructions, op. cit., p. 10.

The policy advisory committees learned of the projected reallocation through the news media. They immediately asked their representatives to exert whatever influence they could to force the CAA board to bring the action of its executive committee to the floor for discussion in an open meeting. Meanwhile the policy advisory committees prepared a presentation outlining the implications of the cutback in funds for the Head Start program; alerted parents to the importance of their presence at the meeting; and took initial steps to enlist the support of the news media. From a careful reading of the CAA charter, the committees learned that the executive committee had acted without authority.

The committees' representatives succeeded in their efforts to influence the board to call an open meeting. The committees presented their case with strong public support, the action of the executive committee was rescinded, and the funds of the delegate agencies were not reduced.(5)

Employed Staff

Staff of Head Start serve the policy-making bodies as advisors, resource persons, enablers, supporters, and encouragers. They are not members and do not vote when votes are taken. (See "The Staff Advisor" below.)

Problem Areas Frequently Encountered

A narrow concept of parent participation. Parent participation and involvement goes beyond parent education and adult activities. It includes opportunities for parents to come to grips with problems that affect their lives and the lives of their families. If parents do not participate in decisions at the policy-making levels of Head Start, the program cannot be responsive to the needs of the parents and their children. It is significant that the Office of Economic Opportunity, in its review of Head Start centers in 1967, found that in every instance where programs utilized fully the contributions of parents, particularly at policy-making levels, the program itself was found to be free of major defects.(6)

Lack of confidence in parents. The attitude that parents are not capable of exercising sound judgment in determining the policies and practices of the Head Start program can have serious consequences.

Parents of Head Start children bring understandings about their families and communities that are valuable to the development of a meaningful program. These understandings should be shared and incorporated into the policies that guide program practices. Parents who live in circumstances of poverty have traditionally been excluded from the policy-making councils of programs that affect them. Many, therefore, have little or no experience in effective decision-making in the context of groups. This lack of experience, however, does not imply that they are incapable of participating in such decisions. With sufficient knowledge of a problem, Head Start parents have shown themselves capable of sound evaluation and judgment.

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5. From the records of a local Head Start program.
6. Lecture by Jack Gonzales, Office of Inspection, New York, May 1967.

Tendency of staff to assume inappropriate roles. Policy-making groups make program determinations with the advice and support of the staff. Staff members are advisors, enablers, resource persons, supporters, and teachers as required by the group as it engages in decision-making. Leadership should be democratically selected by the group from among its members. Staff should recognize that although there are times when they cannot be of direct assistance to the policy-making body, in most instances their knowledge, skills, and support are crucial to the progress and development of the group.

Insufficient staff time budgeted for work and policy-making groups. At least one staff member should carry the role of advisor to policy-making groups as a major responsibility. This important advisory role cannot be adequately carried only as a peripheral duty. Sufficient time should be allotted for him to work soundly with the group as a whole and with individual members.

The Staff Advisor

The staff advisor to policy-making groups should:

1. Be committed to the philosophy and objectives of Project Head Start
2. Be able to identify with the social, economic, and educational problems of families living in poverty
3. Operate on the assumption that Head Start parents can and will respond to meaningful opportunities for participation in decision-making at policy-setting levels of programs that affect their lives
4. Be motivated and able to encourage self-help, with reference both to individuals and groups
5. Be able to work with parents at the levels of the small group and the neighborhood, respecting their ability to contribute to the determination of policies that will result in an improved program and community
6. Have prior experiences and competence, intellectual abilities, maturity, and flexibility sufficient to allow him to fulfill an advisory role in problem-solving and group determination of courses of action
7. Be thoroughly familiar with community problems and their implications for the Head Start program, families, and children
8. Assist in the organization and development of policy-making groups by:
    a. Interpreting the objectives and work of these groups to other Head Start staff members and to neighborhood and community organizations
    b. Bringing to bear, through services to the leadership of such groups, his knowledge of group process and the dynamics that operate within groups
    c. Sharing with the group his knowledge of the community and its resources and of legislative or other policies that affect the group's operation
    d. Assisting with the preparation of agenda and the securing of adequate space for frequent meetings
    e. Assisting with the writing of minutes, letters, and reports
    f. Recognizing and encouraging the emergence of new leadership within the group
    g. Assisting in the planning and execution of effective orientation of all members of the policy-making groups

Membership

Before accepting membership on policy-making bodies in Head Start, potential members should be told:

1. The objectives and functions of the group
2. The demands of membership, especially with respect to the frequency and duration of regular meetings of the group and its subcommittees
3. The kinds of tasks that the group might undertake, the tasks and responsibilities that the group cannot assume because of its relationship to other policy-making bodies in Head Start and in the community, and the restrictions imposed upon it by federal and local legislation

Parents

Parents who participate on policy-making bodies may come to the group at many levels of readiness to take on decision-making responsibilities. A well-conceived structure for parent participation on these groups helps those parents who enter with a minimum of experience to expand their group and leadership skills. Parents who have had experience in groups, such as community groups and committees in other organizations and institutions, will move readily into more complex decision-making groups and should be encouraged to do so.

Volunteers: Nonvoting Participants

Volunteers can be useful to policy-making bodies as advisors and nonvoting members of subcommittees to which they can make special contributions. All members of subcommittees need not be members of the policy-making body. For example, the personnel committee of a policy advisory committee might invite a personnel specialist to serve as a voting member of the policy advisory committee. The purpose would be to make available to the committee the specialized knowledge required in projecting and implementing policies related to personnel practices.

Table 2. Selected roles and functions of members and staff related to policy-making bodies

	Notices of Meetings	Agenda	Meetings	Minutes	Logistics (meeting times and places)
Staff Advisor	Assists member-leader as requested	Co-responsibility with member-leader in planning and preparation	Attends as advisor, resource, interpreter, consultant, etc.	Assists secretary as needed	Co-responsibility with member-leader
Member-Leader	Assumes responsibility for notification; signs written notices	Co-responsibility with staff advisor for planning and preparation	Chairs meetings; keeps discussion focused and moving	Calls for presentation and approval at meetings	Co-responsible for arranging with staff advisor
Members	Assist member-leader as requested	Submit topics and concur on agenda items at beginning of meeting	Contribute ideas and suggestions; participate in discussion and decision-making	Suggest corrections and concur on acceptance	Assist member-leader as requested and needed
Officers		Submit suggested items for agenda before meeting	Present special reports as requested and needed	Secretary responsible for writing and presenting	
Subcommittee Chairman	Assumes responsibility for notification	Submits agenda items	Presents special reports as needed and requested	Responsible for written minutes of committee meetings	

Table 2 (continued)

	Committees	Deciding Issues	Reports and Letters	Task Assignment	Emerging Leadership
Staff Advisor	Assists as needed and as requested	Does not have power of vote	Assists in writing as needed	Assists where appropriate	Assists member-leader in recognizing and developing emerging leadership
Member-Leader	Appoints committees as required; coordinates work of committees	Brings issues to vote or general agreement at appropriate time	Responsible for written reports and sharing content with appropriate persons, including group members	Coordinates assignments	Responsible for encouraging, developing, and utilizing emerging leadership
Members	Serve as members and chairmen; agree on committee membership	All members exercise power of vote and participate in consensus	Approve where appropriate	Assume responsibility for specific tasks as needed	Source of potential leadership
Officers	Act as chairmen of appropriate subcommittees	Exercise power of vote as group members	Responsible for oral or written reports and correspondence as requested by member-leader	Assume short- and long-term responsibility for tasks related to the functioning of the group	Provide opportunities on subcommittees for development of leadership

Table 2 (continued)

	Committees	Deciding Issues	Reports and Letters	Task Assignment	Emerging Leadership
Subcommittee Chairman	Chairs meetings; keeps discussion focused and moving	Brings issues to vote or general agreement at appropriate time	Responsible for oral or written reports as requested by member-leader	Coordinates and directs work of a subgroup assigned to a specific task	Provides opportunities on subcommittee for development of leadership

PARENT DISCUSSION GROUPS

Objectives

Objectives of the parent discussion group are:

1. To provide an opportunity for parents to come together, under the guidance of a leader, in a group situation in which parental concerns can be expressed and shared with others and solutions sought. This interaction provides parents with the opportunity to learn from each other within the framework of the leader's guidance. The leader himself facilitates the discussion and adds new insights and information to the parents' own. Thus an experience is provided in which parents can realize and use their many strengths and abilities to improve their child-rearing practices, their family relationships, and their methods of coping with their environment.

2. To provide an opportunity for parents to increase their competence as mothers and fathers through increased knowledge and through participation in the give-and-take of the problem-solving process. The group discussion helps the parent to hear and think about alternative solutions to problems and to test solutions for their workability.

3. To provide a setting in which unrealized leadership capabilities among parents can be uncovered and within which these capabilities can be encouraged, developed, and utilized.

4. To elicit expressions of common problems by which the group is able to identify areas that call for action. The group and the leader, with the assistance of others as needed, can then explore ways of initiating such action.

Guiding Principles

1. The Head Start parent discussion group is primarily educational in purpose. The discussion group does not follow a set curriculum or focus upon a prescribed learning pattern in the sense that it is a "course" in family life or child health or nutrition. Nor is the emphasis on decision-making or applied democracy. Rather, it is educational in the sense of people learning from one another through a process of guided group interaction.

2. The parent discussion group is conducted under the guidance of a group leader, who is usually a member of the Head Start staff. An outside leader who understands the goals and philosophy of Head Start may be retained if he is trained in discussion group leadership.

3. The parent discussion group is both issue- and task-directed. It examines parents' concerns and questions in child rearing and family and community life. Expectations are that parents gain an awareness of, and find new solutions to, these concerns through participation in the group process.

4. The group should be time-limited, its meetings covering a span of eight to twelve weeks. Membership should be limited to fifteen to twenty parents or parent substitutes in order to maintain opportunities for each member to participate fully.

5. The rationale for the discussion group is based upon the following premises:

   a. Parents feel responsible for the way they rear their children.
   b. Parents genuinely desire to increase their competence and effectiveness as mothers and fathers.
   c. Parents have hopes and aspirations for their children and are eager to provide them with every possible opportunity for achievement in school and in their later lives.
   d. Parents themselves know best what their problems, interests, and concerns are. The discussion group is one setting in which parents may recognize that others share these problems, interests, and concerns. Ways can be explored for common as well as individual approaches to some of their concerns.

The Group Leader

The parent discussion group leader should be equipped with certain knowledges and skills in order to fulfill his role effectively. Important among these knowledges and skills are:

1. Discussion group leadership
2. Head Start policies and philosophy
3. Early childhood education
4. Family life and child-rearing practices
5. Family life in the community, including the realities of life in a poverty community
   a. The strengths and abilities with which poverty families cope with adverse life situations
   b. The needs and concerns of poverty families
6. Resources available to assist poverty families

The leader's role. During the course of the group discussion meetings the leader may increase his knowledge of the particular community through the expressions of the group members. While he builds this fund of knowledge, the leader also builds his knowledge of the individual.members of the group -- their needs and concerns, their strengths, and their areas of vulnerability. The leader and parents together determine whether these needs and concerns are to be reflected in the purposes of the group.

The discussion group leader should be one who respects and values the contributions of each individual. At the same time, he should be able to unify the group around its emerging interests, problems, and goals. By directing the group's concerns to the content of the discussion, the leader opens the door to new and different ideas and facilitates the parents' growth and development.

The leader helps to create the climate of the group: he sets the mood, puts parents at their ease, wins their confidence, and instills enthusiasm and purpose in the group. At the same time he should be aware that the group members themselves can contribute creatively in these ways, and whenever possible he should encourage these expressions. Often the members themselves will set the tone for a meeting. The truly creative leader recognizes and stimulates this spontaneity among the members.

The creative discussion leader can be compared with the creative teacher. He should not approach the discussion with stereotyped attitudes and a rigid lesson plan. Rather, he takes his cues from the members of the group and attempts to create an atmosphere in which learning can take place and in which knowledge becomes meaningful.

Preparing for the meeting. How well the leader can accomplish these purposes depends to a large extent on how well he prepares himself for the group meeting. Has he taken the pains to make himself as well acquainted as possible with the process by which the parents were recruited, the age range of their children, diversity of language, and so forth? Has he, either through his own or other staff's assessment of parental concerns and through the expression of interest on the part of parents themselves, formed a general idea of what to expect in terms of content? Has he prepared an outline based on the purpose of the group so that he can guide the discussion and focus attention on the problems under consideration, yet maintain flexibility to allow the members free expression of their concerns?

Guiding the discussion. While encouraging freedom of discussion, the leader should attempt to guard against the injection of personalities and gossip. And he should not let emotions of the members get out of hand. Warmth and perception are needed to set the members at ease and help them to feel a part of the group, as well as to channel hostility and aggression into constructive paths. In the opening meeting of one discussion group, for example, one of the members, Mrs. M, stated that she didn't see why her children should have any fears or worries. They had a good home, she told the group, not one in which there was only one parent. "My husband and I are together," she said. The leader's report of the meeting notes:

> This was a very touchy subject, because there were a number of single parents there.
>
> Mrs. C said in a somewhat derogatory fashion, "She means because there are two parents she doesn't have to worry about anything."
>
> Mrs. M had gotten herself entangled, and I universalized the question, asking whether the parents thought that broken homes were the only cause of worry and unhappiness among children.... I got a grateful look from some of the mothers who did not have a husband. We were then able to talk a bit more about the question that had been raised -- why children have problems and are unhappy at times.(7)

This demonstrates how the leader managed to move the group away from an emotionally charged situation that might have resulted in friction and resentment among the parents. The leader swiftly generalized a personal issue into a question that had application for all members of the group. In so doing, the leader not only avoided a possible clash but helped to put the group at ease.

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7. This and the following examples concerning parent discussion groups are drawn from the case records of the Child Study Association of America.

Leadership also requires skill at controlling compulsive talkers so that they do not dominate the discussion. In one meeting, a Mrs. F insisted on going into great detail about personal family relationships:

> She (Mrs. F's granddaughter) often asks why she can't live with B (as the child calls her mother), why B lives with other men and has two children from these men, and why her Daddy lives with another woman. There was an obviously uncomfortable family situation. . . . I broadened the question to the universal problem parents have in relation to finding answers to their children's questions.

During the discussion that followed, Mrs. F continued to inject the subject of her family's personal relationships. Although the leader succeeded each time in returning the focus of the group to the general problem of how to answer children's questions, Mrs. F insisted on talking about her family:

> ... when the child visited her mother, the mother's boyfriend stayed in the apartment, and the child often asked, "If D can sleep there, why can't I stay with her?"
>
> There were obvious signs of dismay in the group, and some mothers turned around, as if not to face Mrs. F. . . . At this point, I felt I had to step in. I stated that Mrs. F's concern seemed to be rather a personal one and that undoubtedly it was of great concern to her, but possibly not so much so to the group. Therefore, I suggested I would be very glad to see her privately after the meeting. The group gave me thankful looks, and Mrs. F nodded.

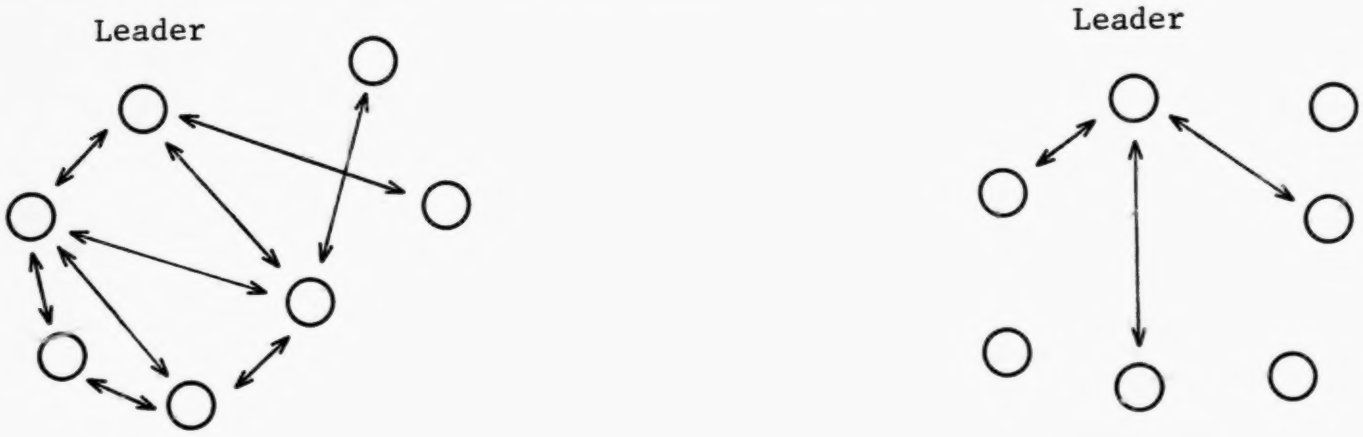
Here, the leader not only handled a situation that could have been disruptive to the group but also showed quick perception of a deep and possibly serious individual problem. By offering to meet privately with the member, the leader indicated a willingness to accept responsibility for counseling individuals. In such a case, the leader might make a referral to an appropriate service within the Head Start center or to a public or private agency in the community.

When difficult situations arise, the discussion leader can sometimes handle them by taking advantage of humor -- his own and others' -- to draw the members together or to break moments of tension.

Skill in pacing the discussion is a prerequisite of good leadership. The leader should keep the discussion moving forward quickly enough so that interest does not flag, but not so quickly that the import of the content is lost. Skillful pacing of the discussion means that the leader must maintain his authority as the leader. He must not abdicate this authority to parents or to resource persons. It is important in this respect for him to be fully aware of the unique position he occupies as leader, rather than as a member, of the group. He is a facilitator and enabler and should recognize that the parent members look to him for direction and meaning.

At the same time, the leader's direction of the group must not be arbitrary or dogmatic. He must be able to engage the interest of the participants and keep the flow of discussion going without "doing all the talking" himself. Nor should he allow the meeting to degenerate into a question-and-answer type of dialogue between the participants and himself. He must also avoid "volleying" the conversation back and forth with one or two of the more vocal members of the group.

He should strive to get the participants talking to each other, stepping in himself only to keep the discussion focused on particular concerns or to bring it back to questions that have been raised but subsequently lost in a profusion of remarks (see Figure 1). He can also suggest consequences or applications of various remarks made by the members, and it is within his province to make suggestions, provided these are not projected as dicta to be accepted and followed blindly by the members. It is also his responsibility to resolve overheated disputes, which are bound to arise in any group discussion.



Like This

Not This

Arrows show the way talk flows.

Figure 1

Assessing the group. In order to embody the integration of learning into the group experience, the leader needs skill in evaluating the group and its individual members in terms of "where they are." This includes an assessment of needs, common concerns, and level of readiness to act on these concerns. This evaluation takes into account the strengths of the members and allows the leader to maintain a realistic balance between the goals and expectations of the members and their ability to develop and carry out desired changes.

Maintaining group focus. Closely tied in with the leader's assessment of the group is his handling of the content of the discussion meetings. This content, or subject matter, includes not only those areas dealt with directly by the group -- immediate concerns, problems, and expectations related to child rearing and improvement in family and community -- but the implicit content as well -- the psychological and sociological patterns and forces that shape parents' attitudes, values, and behavior.

The leader must be able to sustain the parents' interest and keep their orientation focused on concerns of family and community life, not only during the hour or two of the meeting, but over a period of weeks or even months. During this time, it is also the leader's responsibility to add information when it is needed and to consolidate the knowledge and skills that the parents acquire as they participate in the discussion process. Over the period of time during which the discussions take place, the leader may also be developing a nucleus, or core group, of parents for future participation and leadership in community action programs.

Using his skills and his knowledge of the group and their concerns, the leader "builds" the discussion. He assembles the relevant points made in each meeting into a meaningful, action-oriented whole, remembering always that his fundamental responsibility is to create a climate and a readiness for change.

The Group Discussion Method

Preplanning. It has already been noted that the leader should acquire as much firsthand knowledge of the community and of the membership of the group as possible before the first meeting. Using this knowledge, he prepares himself with a tentative plan for the content of the first meeting. In subsequent sessions, he prepares himself with an outline based upon the content of the previous meeting(s).

Housekeeping. Preparation for the meeting includes such chores as selection of the setting, arrangements for chairs, tables, drinking water, and so forth. In selecting the room for the meeting, account must be taken of such factors as size, privacy, heat and ventilation, lighting, cleanliness, etc. The group should be provided with a large table around which they can all be seated. Each member can be given a name card on which to write his own name and possibly the names of his children. Ash trays should be provided, as should materials for notetaking if this is indicated. The leader might also note that some parents will attend only if provisions can be made for child care. A babysitter and suitable play space should be provided for the children of these parents if at all possible.

Attention should be given to these details in advance to assure the best possible conditions for the meeting. At the time of the meeting the leader should be at the meeting room before the time scheduled for the meeting to begin (it is important to greet each new member and to make him feel welcome), although flexibility can be allowed in starting the meeting at the appointed time. The leader might ask those parents who came on time whether they are agreeable to waiting a few minutes for latecomers to arrive, but he should not wait a very long time before starting the meeting.

Setting the contract. In the first meeting, the leader introduces himself to the members, identifying himself as a member of the staff of Head Start. This can be followed with an introductory statement outlining the schedule of meetings, possible rearrangements of hours or days if necessary, and a brief statement of the purposes of the discussion group and the parents' role in it, as well as the leader's own role. In this context the leader indicates the lines of general discussion that may be considered.

The leader should explain that, by sharing their experiences and concerns with one another and the group, parents can explore the possibility of finding answers to some of their questions and determine directions they can take to effect changes in family, school, and community conditions. He should point out that it is his responsibility to keep the group's focus on these problems.

The leader should also clarify the following: the relation of the discussion group to Head Start and the confidential nature of the discussions (what parents say in the meeting will not be "reported"). He might point out that any discussions he has with other staff members about the meeting will concern problems and issues discussed and not what any particular individual has said.

Notes that he takes, the leader must explain, are for the purpose of keeping track of the issues that are brought up, not for a record of who said what.

The go-around. After the leader has established the contract, each parent can be asked to introduce himself and to state the specific problems that concern him. The leader exercises his role in this by preventing unlimited discussion at this point. He might say, "This is an important point, and we'll talk about it later. But first let's give everyone a chance." In this way the leader encourages those parents who are shy or timid and helps the more aggressive ones learn to let each member of the group have his say. At the same time, he should not press parents who are having obvious difficulty in articulating their problems or who can't think of anything to say.

In some groups the leader may find that there is a general reticence or reluctance on the part of the members to start off the discussion. In this case he can suggest topics they might like to consider. For example, parents are very often baffled by some of the things their children do and are upset that they can't get the children to do what they, the parents, want. The leader might point this out and ask the parents what some of these problems are. Or he can ask leading questions based on his own knowledge of the community and of some of the specific problems the parents are likely to have.

The purpose of this initial go-around is to engage the group in discussion and to demonstrate how they will be participating in the meetings. It also makes a start at developing their abilities in defining problems and in recognizing that they have problems in common.

Summary of the go-around. The leader follows the go-around with a summary of the questions raised by the parents and focuses attention on the concerns that seem common to a number of the participants. In doing this, the leader may "group" the concerns under different categories. By establishing a common basis for different concerns, the leader provides a general direction for the discussion.

At the close of this brief summary, the leader might ask the group which topics they would like to talk about. Before accepting a topic for general discussion, the leader should secure the agreement of the group.

The content. In proceeding to the discussion of a specific question, the leader should make sure that the members have a clear idea of the issue. He should elicit from them a precise statement of the problem. If necessary, the leader can help the members formulate the problem. He might then ask, "Does anyone have a similar problem?" If so, he could ask how they handled it or whether any other members of the group have suggestions that might help solve it. There are times when the leader himself should supply information that none of the other participants have and that can help resolve the question under consideration. At other times, the members themselves may conceive of new ways to handle a particular problem. This may be the case when individuals or the group as a whole have conceived the problem in a new context as a result of their clarification of the factors involved.

Summary of the meeting. Each issue that the group agrees to discuss can be handled in this fashion. At the end of the meeting the leader should wrap up various questions that were discussed, relating them to each other and to the purposes of the group. He should also indicate the various determinations that the group has made in regard to these matters. Some may require action by individuals, others by the group as a whole. Still others may be problems that should be considered in greater detail at subsequent meetings. And some issues may be such that they are outside the capability of the group and will require follow-up meetings with other staff members or resource persons.

The leader should take care that highly charged emotional material is not elaborated on in the summary so that the parents do not leave the meeting with feelings of undue anxiety.

Whatever the outcome of the several issues under discussion, the leader should, in his summary, point out areas of possible concern that can be examined at future meetings. Together with the members, he should plan a tentative agenda for the next meeting and suggest areas of concern that members can work on or give thought to during the intervening time.

Chapter VI

INVOLVEMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL PARENT

Many concerns of Head Start parents are addressed in the context of groups. At the same time, parents and children can bring to Head Start their individual strengths, concerns, and problems. Such circumstances often require attention on an individual basis.

For example, the gifted child might present some problems in the classroom and in the home; the parent who is eager to exercise a special talent can make a significant contribution to Head Start; the underemployed father may need assistance and direction as he explores job opportunities. Head Start can provide assistance to families confronted by such circumstances.

This chapter treats the involvement of the individual parent under three broad headings:

1. Community Resources: Information-Giving and Referral
2. Assistance Toward Job Opportunities
3. Volunteers

COMMUNITY RESOURCES: INFORMATION-GIVING AND REFERRAL

Guiding Principles

1. Self-help. The concept of self-help guides Head Start staff in its work with families on their problems. Where institutional assistance outside of Head Start is deemed necessary, staff must assume responsibility for working with parents who require such assistance. The process is viewed as an opportunity for parents to gain experience and confidence in their own ability to deal with those institutions whose purpose is to assist families with specific social, health, educational, legal, and economic problems.

2. Goals. The goals of information-giving and referral are both remedial and preventive. For example, where a family must travel thirty miles to obtain needed nonspecialized medical services, the immediate task is to transport the family to the service. In addition, such a circumstance points up a need for the expansion of community services.

3. Limitations within Head Start. The problems that lend themselves to referral are generally problems whose remedy requires a professional specialist not available in Head Start or whose assignment within Head Start would not allow him to handle the problem. For example, a Head Start specialist such as a child psychologist or a social worker might work directly with a child who shows symptoms of emotional disturbances. He might also work with the parents on specific problems. Usually, however, this specialist's assignment within Head Start would not allow him sufficient time for such prolonged and

intensive help. Furthermore, it might be advantageous to have such problems taken care of in an established, specialized community agency.

4. Collaboration with other agencies and institutions. Head Start must collaborate with other public and private agencies and institutions in its attempt to assist families who seek to alleviate family and community problems. Head Start is neither structured nor equipped to meet all family needs. Head Start, can, however, assist families to identify needs, establish some priority for their remedy, and activate whatever institutional resources exist for that purpose in the community.

5. Formal and informal contacts. The intensity of the relationship between Head Start and an individual parent may vary with the needs of the parent. The relationship itself can grow out of a variety of formal and informal, or casual, contacts that occur between the parent and the staff. Formal contacts are those that are arranged for a specific purpose, such as recruitment interviews or group meetings. Informal contacts are brief encounters that occur without prior planning -- in a hallway, in a restaurant, on the street, or after a group meeting. Informal contacts provide the staff opportunities to assess the needs, concerns, and strengths of parents and add a new dimension to the parents' relationships to the center. Staff members should also view casual contacts with parents as opportunities for building relationships on which formal contacts may be based in the future. In casual contacts staff must distinguish between those times when parents simply want to talk and those times when they are seeking information, direction, or other assistance.

Utilizing Head Start Staff and Program Resources

Information-giving. Information-giving is a short-term approach to helping parents solve immediate problems. It means telling him about agencies and institutions -- including Head Start -- that can assist him in meeting specific personal and family needs. The information may include the kinds of assistance a specific agency or institution can provide: intake procedures, including information about key personnel who can facilitate utilization of the agency's resources; eligibility; and the kinds of practical difficulties that the parent may encounter.

All staff who work with parents will find opportunities to share information about available resources. These opportunities can arise in the context of one-to-one encounters -- such as the recruitment interview -- or in the context of group discussions. The group can often be of assistance to the parent who is faced with an individual problem. The following example illustrates how an individual problem was presented and discussed in a group meeting and how the group and its leader provided specific kinds of help and information to the parent:

> Mrs. L had not been very talkative, which was most unusual for her. When I looked at her somewhat quizzically, she said she knew that she

wasn't up to par today, because she was not feeling well. She then went on to say that she had had a severe pain the night before and this was due to a condition she knew she had since Mark was born. It was some gynecological problem, which the doctor had told her about then and for which she should have had medical care.

What came out in this discussion around her medical problem was the fact that she did not want to go to the General Hospital Clinic, which is the facility where she could have gotten medical care free of charge. She didn't feel that clinics gave very good care and, besides, you have to wait a long time -- hours -- before you are seen. She just couldn't go through with that. Mrs. B said that Mrs. L was just afraid of what the doctor would say, because she thought she might need some surgery. Mrs. L said if she did she certainly couldn't have it, because she didn't know what she'd do about the kids.

We had back-and-forth discussion with participation from me around clinic care. Mrs. McK had gone to General Hospital at times, and she felt that even though you had to wait, the doctors were interested and helpful. Mrs. B said that you had to wait for a private doctor also. I said that while it was true that you did have to wait, I felt that the facilities at General Hospital were very good and that they were developing and improving their program every day.

Mrs. L said she couldn't even afford to have a baby-sitter so she could go for an examination, but Mrs. B pooh-poohed this, saying that Mrs. L knew that she would take care of the children while she was in the clinic. I added to this by saying that there were agencies in the community. Mrs. L had never heard of this resource before and seemed very much interested.

I tied up her need for medical care, not only to her own need, but to what it would mean to the children if she were in good health, and she recognized that when she was feeling ill, as she was today or had been last night, she had very little energy with which to care for the children. She thought this might also have something to do with her "nervousness" at times.

Mrs. L is a determined young woman and does not yield easily, but she did ask how one set up an appointment at General, which Mrs. McK answered. She said that you didn't have to make an appointment, you just went on certain stated days. I suggested that she might call the hospital and find out what the procedure was, that it might save her an unnecessary trip if they had changed their policy since Mrs. McK had been using their services. She also took down the name of Family Service, where homemaker service was available.(1)

Information-giving necessitates neither the intervention of the staff member as liaison between the parent and the agency or institution, nor intricate or sustained follow-up procedures. For example, follow-up in the case study above would take the simple form of the parent sharing with the

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1. Excerpted from a case record in Project ENABLE.

group or the staff member the results of her attempts to use the information and other help they had provided.

Referral. The distinction between information-giving and referral is drawn by the staff member's assessment of the parent's ability for self-help under a given set of circumstances. The referral involves first channeling the parent to another resource within Head Start, where the parent's problem is assessed and referral then made to appropriate services. The staff member must distinguish those circumstances that lend themselves to simple information-giving from those that require more intensive help. One member of every staff team should be designated to handle referrals to other agencies.

The intervention of this staff member on the parent's behalf can take either the form of an enabling action -- whereby the person simply confers at appropriate times during the referral process with appropriate staff of the other agency -- or the form of an advocate action -- whereby the staff person intervenes more intensively on the parent's behalf. The following example illustrates how a parent coordinator interceded for a parent with strong advocate action:

> In regard to the mother in a broken home with very bad teeth, those of us who knew the mother first had a staff meeting and discussed the matter thoroughly. We all agreed that her chances would be much better for procuring a job if she had new dentures. I then went out and contacted one of our local dentists. After explaining the situation to him, he was willing to do the job on a monthly basis.
>
> I then contacted Social Welfare. After drawing their attention to the condition of her mouth and discussing the possibilities of work, they contacted the dentist and arrangements were made. They increased the amount of her Social Welfare monthly check to cover the amount necessary for payment on the teeth.(2)

Strong advocate action usually involves helping the parent through the referral process to the ultimate resolution of the problem. This requires a more intensive and highly structured follow-up than that required in information-giving. For example, periodic intervention is often required to assure a reasonable pace of movement of the parent through an agency's procedures.

This kind of intense follow-up, or ongoing consultation, does not mean that Head Start must know everything about either the operation of the agency or the case history of the parent. It is sufficient to know only those facts about agency and parent that impinge upon Head Start's referral function. These facts should be gathered by the staff member who carries major responsibility for referrals. This staff member must exercise careful, professional judgment in deciding how much of the relevant case history of the parent should be shared with the center staff and with the staffs of other agencies.

The staff's sharing of information about families can be helpful to the whole program but should be undertaken judiciously, providing only information that is useful for specific purposes. The following example illustrates why and how a project director chose to share information about a parent with the leader of a parent discussion group:

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2. Adapted from a personal communication.

> I met with the director briefly before she went into the parent meeting, and she asked how things were going. I said, "Well." She asked, "Is Mrs. P giving you trouble?" and proceeded to describe Mrs. P's conduct at several parent meetings, adding that she thought it might be useful for me to know that this mother had been hospitalized for a "breakdown" recently.(3)

The leader now saw Mrs. P's disruptive behavior in the discussion group in a different light. He began to think of ways in which the group might be helpful to Mrs. P and ways in which he could ensure Mrs. P's continuing participation in the group, which had begun to show some anxiety on occasions when Mrs. P was unduly aggressive or otherwise disruptive but which recognized the value of Mrs. P's contributions to the group discussions. The director shared with the leader the treating specialist's opinion that participation in group activity would be helpful to Mrs. P. The leader then proceeded to encourage Mrs. P's continuing participation in the discussion group.

> After the director left the room, Mrs. P appeared and asked if she could accompany me to a taxi stand and I accepted. We walked together for several blocks during which time I was able to point out to her that there was more than one way to skin a cat and that some of the things she had said were fine but did she think that perhaps she was coming on like "Gang Busters"? She had opened this conversation herself by remarking that she didn't think she was going over well with the group. Should she stay away? As I climbed into a cab, I found myself saying that I hoped she would come to our next meeting. Her last comment had been, "I don't know if I should . . ." but she clearly wanted some coaxing. I found myself thinking that this had not been an injudicious decision on my part and that, in spite of her disruptive effect on the group, her participation had resulted in some unexpected "sparking" and that we had a lively meeting.(4)

Finally, the staff member who carries major responsibility for referrals must exercise professional discretion in deciding the extent to which other Head Start staff can be of assistance in the referral and during the remedial process. He must decide, for example, whether to work with the parent directly or to advise some other staff member who will work directly with the parent. He must determine the point at which his direct intervention is required and the ways in which the program might provide peripheral support to the parent and family in the period during which treatment is being sought and rendered.

Utilizing Community Resources

Head Start can function to bridge the gap in services available to families. Supplementary services -- health and social services -- in Head Start must be planned and implemented with a view toward cooperating with other community institutions and agencies to provide comprehensive family care.

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3. Excerpted from a case record in Project ENABLE.
4. Ibid.

Head Start's supplementary services, like other program components, are programmed from the information gathered about various services -- and the lack thereof -- when the community is being assessed (see Chapter VII). The process of community assessment provides an excellent opportunity for staff to establish contact with other community agencies for handling parents and children referred to them from Head Start. In addition to gathering information about the kinds of service rendered by the agency, its eligibility requirements and fees, its intake service and follow-up procedures, and the adequacy of its staff and material resources, Head Start can begin to structure formal and informal channels for communication with the receiving agency. For example, the receiving agency can be asked to provide a contact person who will assist Head Start parents referred to the agency.

The object of these agreements is to facilitate the movement of parents through the receiving agency's procedures and processes. This preplanning represents Head Start's recognition of the resistance that parents may have to utilizing agency services because of negative past experiences with agencies and their personnel, prejudices, or lack of experience in dealing with agency bureaucracy.

From its assessment of the community, staff should be able to develop a resource handbook that includes important information about existing agencies that administer and execute services in the following areas:

1. Financial assistance
   Department of Welfare

2. Special benefits
   Veteran's Administration; Social Security; Medicare

3. Housing
   Public and private housing agencies; building codes

4. Health
   Hospitals; out-patient clinics; geriatrics and pediatrics clinics; visiting nurse agencies; health codes; mental health clinics and agencies; child guidance clinics

5. Employment and job training
   Public and private employment agencies; OEO programs

6. Law
   Legal Aid; domestic and juvenile court

7. Protection (personal and property)
   Fire; police

8. Education
   Board of education; colleges and universities; adult education agencies

9. Social and recreation
   Public and private recreation; group work agencies

10. Economic
    Banks; credit unions; cooperatives

ASSISTANCE TOWARD JOB OPPORTUNITIES

The Office of Economic Opportunity requires that grantee agencies adopt personnel policies that provide opportunities for employing nonprofessionals, establishing career development programs for all staff, and providing a sound system of compensation.(5)

Most Head Start programs meet this requirement by employing parents in maintenance, clerical, nonprofessional, and subprofessional roles and by collaborating with other community agencies and institutions that provide opportunities for employment of the poor in similar settings. Head Start programs, however, can be structured to make approximately two-thirds of the staff positions available to persons:

1. Who may lack significant formal training or experience, but who, by virtue of personality or informal experience, show potential to perform the duties of the position for which they are employed

2. Who, at the time of initial employment, are poor (as defined by OEO standards)(6)

Guiding Principles

1. As parents work in groups, they often show aptitudes and skills that demonstrate a potential for development and use in staff roles either within Head Start or within other agencies and institutions that provide job opportunities. All staff who work with parents must be alert to such possibilities and must be prepared to direct parents to existing employment opportunities.

   Following is one example of how a staff member identified talent and potential for growth among parents and channeled them to job opportunities:

   In one community a parent coordinator advised parent groups on their work with community problems. The groups had selected their own leaders.

   Much of their activity required direct work with residents in the community -- including personal interviews, the filling out of questionnaires, and the obtaining of multiple signatures on letters and petitions. Several parents who assumed these responsibilities displayed unusual talent and potential for growth in work that involved contacts with the community.

   When the local Community Action Agency announced staff openings for eighteen neighborhood aides, the parent coordinator immediately

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5. Head Start. A Manual of Policies and Instructions. Washington, D. C.: Office of Economic Opportunity, 1967. Pp. 12-13.
6. Ibid., pp. 16-17.

scheduled special talks with the parents who had shown unusual aptitudes. In the conversation, she explored their interest in the staff openings available; described the demands, opportunities, responsibilities of the job; and suggested that the parents consider whether their current commitments as parents would permit them to pursue these jobs as possibilities for themselves. Those parents who expressed interest were then referred, with the recommendation of the parent coordinator, to the personnel officer of the Community Action Agency to begin application procedures.(7)

2. Sufficient job counseling should be provided to enable the parent to determine whether the area of work adequately meets his interests and utilizes his skills and talents. Further, the parent, if a mother, must decide whether family needs and obligations for child care present insurmountable obstacles to the acceptance of employment. Employment for parents may mean making arrangements for the care of their families during the time spent on the job. The expense and complexity of these arrangements measured against the immediate gains of employment can discourage a parent from pursuing job possibilities.

3. Counseling services should be made available to parents with special problems. These services can be short- or long-term, and educational, professional, or personal, depending upon the nature of the problem. Adequate counseling can help prevent a high rate of attrition among employed parents.

4. The center should take full advantage of programs in the broader community that are concerned with hiring and training the unemployed and underemployed. In order to provide knowledge of job possibilities outside of Head Start, contact must be made and maintained with personnel departments of industry and public and private service agencies and institutions. If the Head Start program has assigned responsibility for training and career development to a particular staff member, he would logically become responsible for developing and maintaining these contacts.

Training and Career Development

The employment of parents within the Head Start program is another manifestation of Head Start's concern for training and career development. Parents should be employed with the understanding that opportunities for movement up professional and economic scales can be provided within the structure of the program. Provision for such vertical job movement is an integral part of career development. As parents master the knowledge, skills, and techniques necessary for competent performance in one job category, they should be provided an opportunity to function in other job categories that utilize their new competences but require the acquisition of still others.

Training is an essential element in the provision of opportunities for professional growth. Training programs for employed parents must be

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7. From the account of a Head Start parent coordinator's work with parent groups

comprehensive and meaningful to the extent that these programs:

1. Are planned to increase the efficiency of on-the-job performance and to lay a foundation on which the parent can build further competences
2. Incorporate long-range goals related to meeting the broader educational and vocational needs of parents
3. Are directed toward utilizing and building upon the talents and knowledge the parent brings to the staff team
4. Are planned with knowledge of the personnel needs of other agencies, institutions, and industries -- especially those with similar job requirements
5. Make provision for ongoing evaluation of both training and job performance
6. Are structured with appreciation of the human problems that affect job performance

Orientation and Supervision

Orientation and supervision are crucial aspects of the program for employment of parents in Head Start. As is true of other staff, preparation and support for the immediate tasks to be performed, an introduction to Head Start -- its administration, program, and philosophy -- are essential if the nonprofessional is to function effectively and with personal satisfaction. This is in no way a contradiction of a long-term plan for training but is a first step toward fulfillment of a comprehensive plan.

The chapters in this curriculum that deal with teamwork and supervision further develop concepts and methodology related to orientation and supervision.

Problem Areas Frequently Encountered

Training too narrowly focused. The "locked-in" nonprofessional might be described as that worker who has undergone training that prepares him to carry only one role. Vocational training programs should take cognizance of the potential transferability of talents and should not focus on only one area of human service. This limited focus can result in the kind of locking-in that is related to chronic unemployment. The transferability of the talents of the nonprofessional parent can be one of his strongest assets as an employable worker.

Omission of elements of general education in training programs. Training must take cognizance of the importance of the liberal studies. Liberal studies are important because they lay a foundation of general knowledge on which the parent can build should he decide to undertake further education and training outside Head Start.

Equivalency. There is a need to assist parents who decide to meet the requirements of secondary equivalency tests. This need can be met by providing staff to undertake remedial work with parents designed to prepare them to meet equivalency requirements. The community might provide similar educational opportunities for parents, in which case the parent can be referred to agencies that sponsor the remedial programs.

Credentials. The thrust of opportunities provided through training must be manifold. Even as parents acquire the educational equipment and skills needed to perform tasks in Head Start and other service professions, the doors to new educational opportunities must be opened for those who choose or can be encouraged to forge ahead. When equivalency requirements have been met, parents must be helped to continue on to college and university courses that will further prepare them for movement up the career ladder. Increasingly, colleges and universities are acknowledging the validity of providing for the ready acceptance of this body of students and are providing academic credits for their work. Much, however, remains to be done in this area. Project Head Start, in the Office of Economic Opportunity, is in the vanguard of this important and creative thrust.

Securing the role of the nonprofessional. Head Start should develop relationships with other service agencies and institutions that employ adults in nonprofessional roles. Such relationships aid parents to gain meaningful employment outside the Head Start program. Such relationships also help to coordinate the work of agencies actively concerned with creating and sustaining roles for the nonprofessional in their staffing patterns.

VOLUNTEERS

Guiding Principles

1. Volunteers are unpaid personnel, usually working on a part-time basis, who perform important tasks that supplement, but preferably do not replace, the work of employed staff in the program.

   A major aim in the use of volunteers is to support and enrich the Head Start program. To achieve this, thought should be given to ways in which the volunteers can be integrated most effectively into the work of the total program. One approach that can be used involves the following steps (it is desirable to have all members of the Head Start team participate in these deliberations in appropriate ways):

   a. Examination of the total program to determine manpower needs for specific roles and responsibilities
   b. Assessment of roles that can best be filled by employed staff and those that can be filled by volunteers
   c. Determination of the administrative activities -- among them assignment of staff; allocation of time and space; recruitment, training, and supervision; and budget costs -- necessary to develop a volunteer program
   d. Creation of a master plan to develop and implement a volunteer program as an integral part of the total Head Start program

2. In general, volunteers can serve as:

   a. Members of policy-making boards
   b. Professionals (group leaders, part-time social workers, etc.)
   c. Nonprofessionals (aides to professionals, clerical and secretarial workers, kitchen and maintenance workers, babysitters, etc.)

Recruitment

It should not be assumed that volunteers represent a free source of manpower that can be easily tapped to fill positions that should properly be held by employed staff. There are significant differences in the working conditions that apply to employed staff and volunteers in terms of job demands and obligations, administrative accountability, and personnel practices. These differences need to be considered in deciding whether a staff member or a volunteer should fill a specified position.

Recruitment should be based upon the guiding principles outlined in the chapter on recruitment and modified where necessary to apply to a wide range of potential volunteers.

Since volunteers may be secured either individually or as a group, the various organized groups within the community should be contacted. In addition, word-of-mouth campaigns and use of the mass media are productive ways in which to recruit volunteers. An assigned staff person should be ready to receive calls that result from such recruitment efforts.

It is helpful if each volunteer is interviewed in the center so that he can view firsthand the Head Start operations and programs. The interview should be carefully planned so that the prospective volunteer understands the Head Start program and his role within it -- including the satisfactions he can gain through his service as well as his obligations. Volunteers should not be perceived as free labor and therefore exempt from conforming to expectations (such as preparing adequately for the task, being regular and punctual, writing records, attending meetings, etc.) that must be met in order to run an efficient, high-quality program.

In interpreting the Head Start program to a prospective volunteer, the interviewer (preferably the staff person charged with responsibility for volunteers) should review the lists of tasks that need to be filled. While the responsibility for the assignment of volunteers rests with the staff, based upon an assessment of abilities and competences, this must be mutually agreeable to both staff and volunteer. The volunteer may suggest that he has a particular skill that can be utilized in the program. For example, an attorney, selected to organize a staff to provide legal services to parents, might suggest that he become counsel to the Head Start center.

Volunteers may be recruited from a broad spectrum of groups and levels in the community:

1. Age -- from teenagers to retired adults
2. Sex -- both males and females, particularly males to work with children
3. Occupational -- a wide range, from professional to semiskilled
4. Economic -- all income levels
5. Racial, ethnic, and religious -- a variety of such groupings
6. Educational -- all educational levels

While the primary aim of volunteer recruitment is to fill manpower and program needs, secondary benefits -- both for the program and the volunteers themselves -- may be derived through engaging volunteer personnel from diverse backgrounds. For example, an upper-class professional may not only gain greater understanding of those living under conditions of poverty, but his Head Start experience may also result in his active support and participation in maintaining such programs. At a time such as the present, when the feasibility of continuing the various poverty programs is increasingly questioned, this kind of support can be of inestimable value. Similarly, Head Start parents can learn much from their own participation as volunteers -- about themselves, the Head Start program, and other groupings in the larger community. They also have the opportunity to see that their own contributions to the program and the community are highly valued.

Volunteers, including Head Start parents, can and will be recruited from all the categories cited above, providing:

1. The nature of the program and its value are clearly articulated
2. The tasks open to volunteers are legitimate and important, and not merely busywork
3. The steps in the implementation of the volunteer program are organized to achieve maximum benefits for both the volunteer and the center
4. The volunteer is carefully oriented and is supported through training and supervision. This holds equally for the upper-class professional and for the Head Start parent.
5. Provisions are made for the volunteer to experience genuine rewards and satisfactions from his service in the center

Excuses should not be offered by staff for a lack of volunteers from the Head Start community. Such popular myths as they are too poor, too overburdened, too disinterested, too disorganized, too unskilled, or too reluctant to join formal organizations are too often used as reasons for a lack of volunteer participation. If the Head Start program is meaningful and if the atmosphere is welcoming, parents will volunteer. If people in the Head Start community do not volunteer, the staff is obligated to re-examine its program and ferret out the reasons _why_ they do not participate in this way.

An efficient, effective volunteer program requires a considerable investment of time and resources. Haphazard or casual efforts by staff who are burdened by other major responsibilities can result in more problems than advantages. A volunteer program should support, not detract from the regular program. If resources are not available among the employed staff, a qualified volunteer, with direct responsibility to a designated staff person, can be appointed to undertake major responsibility for the volunteer program.

Orientation, Training, and Supervision

Volunteers need to be fully oriented, trained, and supervised in their particular roles. The better these activities, the better volunteer performance is likely to be.

Group supervision may be feasible, but whatever the form, it should be regular. The volunteer needs, and is entitled to have, his performance assessed on a regular basis; he needs to share his successes and be supported during periods of frustration and self-doubt. This helps the volunteer gain satisfaction from the service he contributes to the program. Moreover, through supervision, the volunteer can provide important program feedback to the staff.

Careful preparation for the induction of volunteers into the program includes work with the regular staff so that the latter will understand and support the volunteer program. In addition the staff plays an important role in helping the volunteer do his job.

Chapter VII

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Community assessment means gathering, interpreting, and evaluating information about a particular community. This information helps give direction in planning, implementing, and evaluating a Head Start program. Its purpose is to uncover the network of internal and external forces that produce the characteristics of the community.

Community assessment provides a body of information and insights that every staff member needs to do his job effectively and sensitively. For example, the teacher needs it to understand the child's milieu; the director needs it to understand and relate meaningfully to community residents and their problems; employed parents and elected group leaders need it for their work in the community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Assessment should be part of the initial planning and implementing of the program; some assessment must precede program planning.
2. Assessment is a continuing process, since changes in the neighborhood and in the community-at-large produce changes in the relationships among individuals, groups, and institutions.
3. All members of the Head Start staff can contribute to assessment on a continuing basis, and opportunities for the staff to share and weigh new information should be structured.

ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT: THE PROCESS

The process of community assessment involves four major components:

1. Information-gathering
2, Study of the information
3. Program design and implementation
4. Evaluation for future planning

Information-gathering. During this phase, important material about the community is gathered: statistics and historical data from studies, bibliographies, reports, newspapers, and other sources; and information about the people, community groups, significant neighborhood events, community attitudes and customs, leaders and leadership roles -- secured from the people in the community by talking with them and asking about events that take place. Going to community meetings and affairs is also helpful.

Study of the information. Data gathered during the information-gathering period is then studied and interpreted in terms of its meaning for the individual, the family, and the social and institutional life of the community. The attitudes, mores, habits, points of view, and preferences of individuals and groups are important -- their view of themselves in relation to other individuals, groups, and institutions and their views regarding community strengths and the needs and priorities for meeting these needs.

Adequate study of sufficient information should answer the following questions:

1. What relationship exists between the formal and the informal structures and their leaders in the community?
    a. Who makes the decisions in and for the community?
    b. What are the lines of communication between formal and informal sources of power?
    c. What kinds of pressures do these sources of power exert in the immediate community and in the community-at-large?
    d. Who are the pivotal persons in these maneuvers?
2. What major social and political forces operate in the community?
    a. What relative power and influence are wielded by these forces?
    b. On what matters do they agree? On what matters do they disagree?
3. What legal and social welfare resources are available to the community?
4. What are the attitudes of the community toward social changes?
5. What impact on program planning and implementation will the norms, values, and mores of the community have?
6. What are the most pressing and overt needs? Covert needs?
7. How mobile is the population -- or how stable? What does this mean for the program?
8. What is the rhythm, or pace, of the community as it moves on issues of interest or concern to it?

The study and interpretation of information about the community can be an item on the agenda of meetings of the Head Start team. It can also be a function carried by individual staff members as they constantly seek to understand the children and their families served in the Head Start program.

Parents of children in the program and other residents in the Head Start community can be of help in interpreting information about the neighborhood and community that may not be readily understood by the staff. The meanings that residents attach to factual data may be quite different from that inferred by the staff members who are nonresidents.

Program design and implementation. The knowledge and insights provided by study and interpretation of information serve as guidelines to program planning and implementation. Program objectives, components, and priorities may be determined in terms of the resources available to Head Start, when these are measured against the needs of the community.

Planning should never take place in a vacuum. Creative planners know that Head Start programs will reflect the communities in which they are located. The milieu must be known and understood if the program is to achieve its maximum effect.

Therefore, information is gathered and studied; its meanings -- for the community and the program -- are interpreted as soundly as possible, and the outcomes are applied in planning and in implementation of the program. These processes of gathering and studying information about the community should be continuous. What is now known may not remain current and relevant. Situations and people change. It is essential that the vitality of the Head Start program be relevant to the emerging needs of the families that it serves.

Evaluation for future planning. An attempt has been made in this curriculum to establish that the purposes and goals of Head Start are rooted in the expectation that changes will take place. These changes should be discernible, not only in the child and in the quality of his family life, but also in the community. The quality of these changes must be evaluated in order for future planning to take place.

AREAS OF DATA-GATHERING

Outlined below are some of the kinds of information that are useful in community assessment. Categories and subcategories have been arbitrarily chosen and are not intended to represent an exhaustive list of all possible types of useful information.

History

- How and why community was formed
- Significant events and conditions and resulting changes
    1. Changes in racial and ethnic composition
    2. Changes in religious composition
    3. Changes in socioeconomic composition

Population

- Percentage by age
- Percentage by race
- Number of persons living in families
- Sex ratio
- Average family size
- Proportions married, singled, divorced
- Rate of in-migration
- Rate of outward movement

Employment

- Rate of unemployment
- Proportion of labor force employed as:
    1. Professionals
    2. Skilled workers
    3. Semiskilled workers
    4. Unskilled workers
    5. Domestics
    6. Service workers
- Employment opportunities in the community
- Training and counseling opportunities

Physical Description

- Geographic location
- Topography
- Climate
- Natural resources
- Area
- Census tracts
- Health areas
- Type of community
    1. Industrial (urban)
    2. Agricultural (rural)
    3. Suburban

Income

- Average family income
- Sources of income
    1. Employment
    2. Property
    3. Investment
    4. Other
- Average per capita income

Economic Considerations

- Facilities that have attracted investment
- Cooperatives
- Credit unions
- Small business associations
- Urban renewal
- Leading policies and practices
    1. Banks
    2. Savings and loan companies
    3. Finance companies

Welfare and Benefits

- Number of recipients, adequacy of service and payments, intake and follow-up procedures
    1. Aid for Dependent Children
    2. Social Security
    3. Veterans and other disability allowances
    4. Pensions
    5. Others

Housing

- Total number of units
- Proportion of owner-occupied units
- Type of units
    1. Single-family
    2. Two-family
    3. Apartments
- Average size of units
- Number of rooms per person
- Proportion of units without bath
- Proportion of units without kitchen
- Condition of units
    1. Proportion dilapidated
    2. Proportion deteriorated or deteriorating

Housing (continued)

- Age of units
- Number of low-income units
- Number of middle-income units
- Renewal plans
- Rent figures
- Tax rates

Legal Factors in Housing

- Zoning regulations
- Housing regulations
    1. Remodeling and repair regulations
    2. New construction
- Terms of eviction

Services

- Recreation (including parks)
- Health
- Transportation
- Sanitation
- Fire protection
- Police protection and law enforcement
- Mental health
- Child care
- Cultural
- Educational
- Legal

Education

- Average level of education
- Number of school-age residents

Education (continued)

1. Pre-kindergarten
2. Grades K - 6
3. Grades 7 - 9
4. Grades 10 - 12

- Dropout rate
- Average size of classes
- Teacher-pupil ratio
- Number of college graduates
- Annual expenditure per pupil
- Reading achievement level (by grade)
- Mathematics achievement level (by grade)
- Annual expenditures on materials, laboratories, and school libraries
- Availability of educational counseling services
- Curriculum

Patterns of Family Life

- Dominant family structure
- Influence of family structure on the character and structure of other institutions which serve the family as a group or as individuals
- Relative position of males and females
- Relation between old and young
- Child-rearing practices
- Distribution by age
- Average size

Health

- Rate of infant mortality
- Infectious diseases
- Main causes of death
- Pathology

Health (continued)

- Rates of crime (by category)
- Rates of juvenile delinquency
- Abortion
- Illegitimacy
- Drug use and addiction
- Alcoholism

Religion

- Number of organizations
- Number of denominations
- Size of congregations
- Nature: militant, fundamentalist, liberal, etc.
- Relation to other community institutions
- Influence in community
- Effects of doctrine on attitudes, behavior, moral precepts, acceptance of new ideas
- Social status associated with membership
- Sponsorship of social, educational, recreational programs

Traditions and Attitudes

- Attitudes toward visitors and newcomers
- Characteristics which residents say they favor (honesty, generosity, etc.)
- Creativity, diligence, courtesy, etc.
- Attitudes toward education
- Attitudes toward politics and political power
- Attitudes toward money and work
- Attitudes toward neighbors
- Attitudes toward people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Attitudes toward public and private institutions in the community

Traditions and Attitudes (continued)

- Superstitions

- Attitudes toward socioeconomic status

- Religious and cultural blocks to the acceptance of new ideas and modes of behavior

Head Start Structure

- Center level (by persons)

- Local level (by persons)

- Regional level (by persons)

- National level (by persons)

Municipal Organization

- Administrative structure (departments of city hall with names and positions of key persons)

- Jurisdiction

- Powers

  1. Mayor
  2. Council
  3. Appointees
  4. Departments

- Recent changes to facilitate planning and fitting programs to the needs of the people

- Channels for public participation in planning

- Does the city control water, gas, electric, sanitation, fire, health, welfare, transportation, etc.? (departments, with names and positions of key persons)

- How is tax revenue and other income spent?

- Is there evidence of political patronage in the community?

- Do political and citizen groups operate in the community?

Chapter VIII

COMMUNITY ACTION

HEAD START AS COMMUNITY ACTION

Head Start is a community action program. It was originally conceived as such within the community action framework of the War on Poverty: ". . . Head Start is one of the many programs for which a community action agency or other public or private non-profit agency can be funded."(1)

Community action is, therefore, not a question of choice: the focus of Head Start is more than child development. Head Start is community action.

The disadvantaged preschool child is one focal point of intervention in the War on Poverty. For some time it has been recognized that to attack the problems of the preschool children, a new program would have to be created in which new concepts of education, medical care, and social services could be applied. But beyond that, Head Start was conceived on the premise that with the children in a preschool program there would be involvement of the families of these children, the residents and organized groups of the community (local government, private agencies, business, schools, religious groups, etc.), and others in a common effort to fight poverty.

This pulling together of forces in a common endeavor to act in behalf of the local and national community, with assistance of OEO, constitutes what is called community action. It is a joint local and federal effort based on the conviction that to eradicate poverty it is necessary to coordinate a plan to promote basic changes that would create new opportunities for the poor to share in the abundance of this country:

> Community Action is a local coalition against poverty. It is a way for local citizens to work together in improving and enriching the lives of all the residents. It is a process of building bridges between poor and non-poor, between government officials and private groups, between professionals and laymen, between agencies which operate related programs, between the poor and the opportunities which could help them become self-sufficient, productive, respected citizens. Of great importance is the building of bridges between one poor person and another, so they can share the dignity of self-help in escaping from poverty.(2)

Recognizing the impact upon the child of inadequate education, poor health, family disorganization, dilapidated housing, unemployment, deteriorated communities, Head Start must continue beyond its strongly developed emphasis on the classroom, nutrition, health, etc., to further develop its community action focus by working with parents on their views about Head Start, on their needs

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1. CAP Guide, Vol. I, Part A, Section 2, as quoted in Head Start. A Manual of Policies and Instructions, Washington, D.C.: Office of Economic Opportunity, 1967.
2. Organizing Communities for Action Under the 1967 Amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act. Washington, D.C.: Office of Economic Opportunity, 1968. P.4.

as citizens and members of the community, on their concerns about the changes that are necessary to open more opportunities for themselves and their families.

Unless Head Start puts into practice this emphasis on community action through its parent participation component, it will be a marvelous new program for children but one that does not really touch the roots of poverty nor act as a catalyst for social changes that must occur.

This chapter is intended to alert the staff of Head Start to the implications of community action and the responsibilities each member of the team has to carry. It describes the process (problem-solving) by which the Head Start staff works with parents in groups, using the knowledge and techniques discussed in the chapter "Work with Groups." Further, this chapter treats some ways in which parents can participate in the decision-making processes of Head Start through its advisory bodies (community action within the Head Start structure) and how they can function directly on community issues -- how a community's major problems can be determined so that priorities for needed change can be established and action programs organized.

COMMUNITY ACTION IN HEAD START THROUGH PARENT PARTICIPATION

Social changes are essential if the conditions of poverty are to be eradicated in this nation. Head Start intervenes in this process of change through the early and compensatory education of the child from poverty circumstances and through the involvement of the parents in both the processes of education and of outreach to the community.

A concern for community action moves Head Start programs toward assisting parents in achieving their aspirations, improving their neighborhoods and communities, and changing community conditions that adversely affect the welfare of themselves and their children. Help is also given them in understanding the process through which they can acquire power through involvement in the decision-making structures of local, state, and national political and economic social systems.

Such parent participation necessitates careful definition of the auspices under which Head Start programs delegate responsibility to move into this dynamic and sometimes controversial area.

The 1967 Amendments to the Economic Opportunity Act (EOA) clarified the purposes and functions of the Community Action Agency (CAA). Emphasis was placed on the fact that CAA was not simply to dispense welfare or social services to the poor. It was charged with responsibility to "Exert its influence to stimulate a better focusing of all available local, state, private and federal resources upon the goal of enabling low-income families, and low-income individuals of all ages, in rural and urban areas, to attain the skills, knowledge, and motivations and secure the opportunities needed for them to become fully self-sufficient."(3)

In this definition of its responsibility, the CAA is held to certain expectations by EOA. These expectations can also be listed as goals for parent participation in community action. They include the need to:

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3. Ibid., p.5.

Significantly and meaningfully involve the poor in developing and carrying out antipoverty programs.

Mobilize public and private resources in support of antipoverty programs.

Coordinate efforts throughout the community so as to avoid duplication, improve delivery of services, and relate programs to one another.

Plan and evaluate both long and short range strategies for overcoming poverty in the community.

Serve as an advocate of the poor on matters of public policy and programs which affect their status, promoting institutional improvement and desirable changes in social policies and programs.

Encourage administrative reform and protect individuals or groups against arbitrary action.(4)

The act also provides ways in which this effort can be organized, carried out, and controlled by local residents. These are the "neighborhood level organizations, including neighborhood centers and community based organizations. These will play a major role in evaluating needs and programs, and in developing and conducting programs which serve the residents of the area."(5)

Parents can also participate in the "mainstream of community discussion and decisions" as members of the Head Start advisory bodies and CAA boards, along with local officials and other community representatives. The building of such bridges, which "share responsibility among all elements of the community," is viewed by the 1967 Amendments to EOA as successful community action.

Therefore, by law, Head Start holds an obligation to fulfill the community action requirements in working with parents. It is possible for Head Start programs to give unique leadership in community action because the aspirations that poverty parents hold for their child provide a special thrust toward action. A beginning can be made as parents participate and become involved in programs.

COMMUNITY ACTION WITHIN THE HEAD START STRUCTURE -- IMPLICATIONS FOR STAFF

Responsibilities of the Team

It is the duty and responsibility of every staff member to work with parents on their community concerns. In varying degrees and with a range of emphases, these duties and responsibilities can be identified for all staff -- from recruiters of children and parents to directors of grantee agencies.

Administratively and operationally, Head Start staff can facilitate or inhibit the development of competence in the ability of parents to improve their life condition through planning and effort. Parents can be supported and

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4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

encouraged by staff to independence or to dependency; to creative self-help or to acquiescence; to increased sophistication about the workings of various social systems -- for example, institutions, organizations, and governmental agencies -- and to skill in negotiating these systems for their benefit, or toward increased apathy regarding their ability to effect change.

With recognition that each Head Start staff member is assigned a different kind of responsibility, it should be noted that at least one staff member in each child development center should be given direct responsibility for work with parents on their community concerns. This staff member is sometimes given the title of parent coordinator. In some cases the social worker carries this role. In other instances, this is one responsibility of a staff member who also carries other duties.

When community residents, chiefly parents of Head Start children, are employed to assist the coordinator, they may be termed community (or parent) aides. These staff members carry major responsibility for programs of parent participation. Other Head Start staff personnel give support and encouragement but also give direct help, as needed, in the development of parent programs.

Table 3, which follows, describes some of the general responsibilities of staff members in work with Head Start parents on their community concerns.

The process of carrying on these responsibilities involves a sequence of steps that are formulated here in the context of problem-solving.

Problem-Solving as the Process of Work with Parents in Community Action

The problem-solving process is a dynamic concept that serves several purposes: to assess the community and to plan and implement community action.

It involves a sequence of steps where the group of parents, or those who are assessing the community (Head Start staff, parents, other agencies, etc.), or those who are planning and implementing community action -- all these people -- can begin. From defining the community problem as they initially conceive it, they can go on to study alternatives for its solution, and finally engage in direct action. This process requires knowledge about the issue involved, plus an attitudinal response to its meaning, importance, consequences, and skills related to "how to go about" promoting necessary changes.

The Problem-Solving Process

The problem-solving process is crucial to effective participation in decision-making, which is the core for planning and action. Although many low-income citizens have gained experience in coming to grips with problems and making choices that affect their immediate environment, that is, their families and home, in most cases they have not experienced the process of decision-making within the context of groups.

Group decision-making may be conceptualized as the determination of choices by groups of persons. Opportunities for participation with others in the making of such decisions form the foundation of the democratic idea and are crucial to the process of community action.

Table 3. General responsibilities of staff for work with Head Start parents on their community concerns

Employed Staff	General Responsibilities for Community Action
Program Director	1. Is directly responsible for supporting and promoting community action, establishes a climate within which the roles of staff and parents are validated, encouraged, and supported in the development of community action programs 2. Oversees the development and supports the work and contributions of parent committees, including the center committee, as related to community action 3. Develops and maintains viable relationships with other child development centers and community agencies, institutions, and groups as regards their assistance to, and support of, the work of the parents 4. Provides time for reports on programs of community action in staff meetings
Teacher	1. Is alert to concerns about social problems as expressed by parents in their activities related to the classroom; makes home visits during which, by observation and conversation with parents, note is made of problems that are useful for staff team discussions and, possibly, parent group discussions 2. Shares the above information and insights with the staff team 3. Relates the problems noted with the children to understandings of the social situation from which they come and utilizes insights with those Head Start staff who work directly on community action 4. Becomes increasingly familiar with and to the community served 5. Seeks and uses insights of parents in work with children
Teacher Aide	1. Same as teacher 2. Observes the children in the classroom and at play, which may give leads for the need for follow-up in home visits

Table 3 (continued)

Employed Staff	General Responsibilities for Community Action
Parent Activities Coordinator	1. Provides staff leadership for coordination of the work of parent groups on their community concerns; provides resources to staff who work directly with parent groups; places in communication with each other those groups that are working separately on common issues; provides stimulation and encouragement to staff and parents 2. Is a staff leader in the total Head Start team for interpretation of all community-related work, current and projected, by parent groups 3. Is responsible for relating experienced, as well as new and emerging, parent leadership to the various levels of decision-making in Head Start and to opportunities for leadership collaboration and cooperation outside Head Start 4. Maintains a good working relationship with community agencies, groups, and institutions so that the outreach of Head Start parent groups can be facilitated 5. Develops relationships with community leaders of many orientations and points of view so that a better understanding of the pace, temper, and prevailing views of the community can be achieved and maintained 6. Maintains a continuing evaluation of changes in the community to the end that the roles of "resource" and "enabler" can be achieved and maintained in a relevant way
Community Aide	1. Develops and maintains sound interpersonal relationships with parents so that the quality of communication on matters of personal, family, group, and community concern is strengthened and mutual efforts of Head Start and parents are promoted in coming to grips with these concerns 2. Develops and maintains sound working relationships between Head Start and community groups, agencies, and institutions

Table 3 (continued)

Employed Staff	General Responsibilities for Community Action
Community Aide (continued)	3. Is alert to changes in community pace, interests, and concerns, particularly as these factors affect families in the Head Start program. These changes, and perceptions of the why of these changes, are shared with the parent activities coordinator and the staff team. 4. Serves as staff advisor to selected parent groups and may sometimes organize these groups for special purposes 5. May provide "escort service" for parents to meetings of broad interest in the larger community, to recreational events outside the neighborhood, and to "service" agencies and institutions unfamiliar to the individual parent or parent group 6. Assists in all other staff recruitment of Head Start parents for participation in Head Start programs of community action
Medical Director	1. Identifies areas of health deficiencies that prevail to a marked degree among the children in program, particularly those that may indicate dangerous health hazards in the neighborhood or community (for example, water pollution, diseases traceable to poor quality of food supply, lacks in emergency health care, etc.). These insights are made available to Head Start general staff, who can explore them as concerns with parent groups. 2. Discusses matters of health care and preventive health measures with parent groups; also, interprets proper procedures for families to follow in securing needed medical coverage and treatment (Medicare, etc.) 3. Serves as an advocate for parents and families in securing access to needed health care and services

Table 3 (continued)

Employed Staff	General Responsibilities for Community Action
Psychologist	1. Deals with problems of mental health and identification of the roots of these problems. When such problems -- and their roots -- are related to issues that arise from unresolved problems of housing, family-community living (for example, juvenile delinquency), school-family conflicts, etc., these areas of concern should be shared with the staff team. 2. Makes referrals for group participation, based on the assessment of need for such experiences (for example, parent discussion or special interest groups)
Nutrition Director	1. Helps to identify, for the staff team, those areas of nutrition that should be given particular attention in parent groups. Exploration of these areas, with parents, could identify the need for parents to develop educational groups devoted to meal-planning, food-buying, consumer interests, etc. 2. Serves as a resource, staff advisor, or leader in "nutrition-related" parent groups 3. Makes referrals of families for group discussions on matters of nutrition 4. Identifies problems related to food supply and demand in the neighborhood; also identifies the quality of foods supplied in neighborhood stores
Directors of Delegate and Grantee Agencies	1. Develop and maintain structure and climate for effective participation, deliberation, and decision-making by parents and others in appropriate policy advisory bodies 2. Develop and maintain administrative and programmatic structure for implementation of decisions made by policy advisory bodies

Table 3 (continued)

Employed Staff	General Responsibilities for Community Action
Directors of Delegate and Grantee Agencies (continued)	3. Provide support and encouragement to staff who carry specific assignments for work with parents on their community concerns. This should include the provision of staff time for the handling of responsibilities and for continuing relationships with community organizations. 4. Demonstrate a personal concern for the involvement of parents in Head Start and in the broader community by helping to provide opportunities for their meaningful participation and by removing barriers to such participation

Problem-solving, therefore, is the process in which decision-making is accomplished. Figure 2 describes some of the general phases of this continuing process and is purposely represented as a circle. The steps in problem-solving include:

Exploration of concerns and identification of the problem. In this phase, the group seeks to understand, with the help of its leadership, what problems lie at the root of their expressed concerns. They may identify a range of such problems, from which the one problem which seems most central to their concern emerges. The members then explore the following questions: How widespread is the problem? Whom does it affect? What is its impact upon those who are affected?

The staff member may have to exercise judgment in relation to the "expressed concern." See "The Group Leader" in the discussion of parent discussion groups in Chapter 5 for a description of the process that takes place as the total range of concerns of a group, its complaints, grievances, frustrations, disturbances, insults, and injuries, are all put forth in the discussion, and the central concern -- with the help of the leader -- is distilled to the level of the "expressed concern" or the precise identification of the problem(s).

Information is needed at this point to define the problem more accurately, starting with data that is available and gathering more if and as needed. Both objective and strategic dimensions are important in this regard. For example:

1. Is this a real problem or a pseudo-problem? For example, is the community blaming the welfare system for its basic problem of poor housing? Or, is it blaming a racial or ethnic group for problems that are basically problems of a lack of jobs or recreational opportunities?

2. Is the problem real but only a part of an underlying and more significant problem? For example, the elementary school on the corner is overcrowded, but all of the schools are overcrowded, so more schools are needed.

3. What social subsystem is the scene or location of the problem? Is it the individual school, the local school system, or the state school laws or rules? Or is the location in one or all of these subsystems?

4. Since the problems and social systems interlock, is this problem one that overlaps systems? For example, if Johnny sleeps in the classroom is the problem that Johnny does not get enough to eat because of poverty? Is it poor teaching? Or are there disturbances within Johnny's family so that he cannot sleep at night? Is this a problem of two or more subsystems -- family and school? And, perhaps, of a relationship between the two subsystems?

5. If this problem is solved, how would the solution affect (make better or worse) other related problem situations? For example, if the bond issue is voted for youth recreational support, would this make it harder to get funds for a school that would provide recreation facilities?

If the parent group achieves a small victory, would this lead to more effective organization and bigger victories and, therefore, be a better strategy

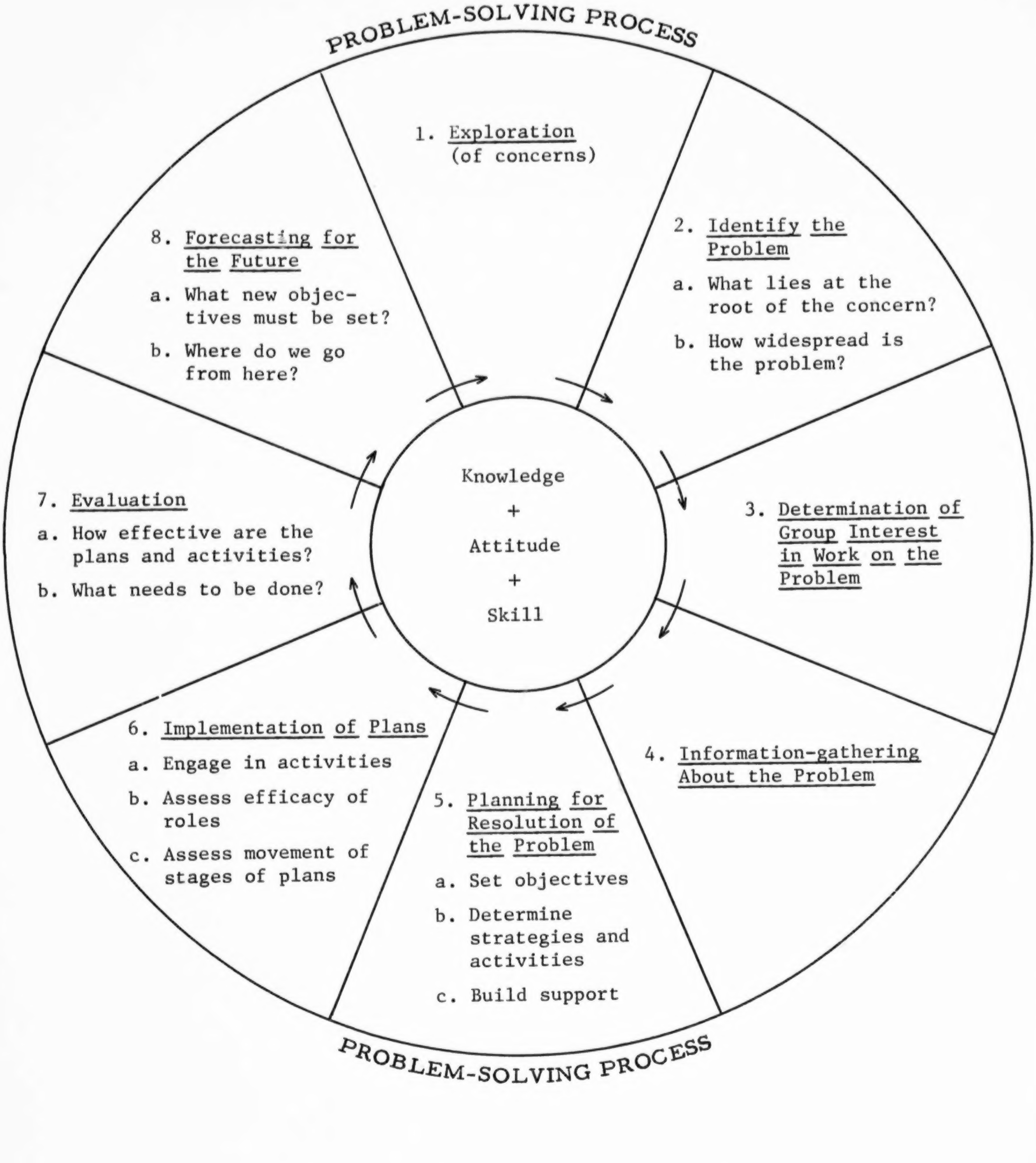
PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS
1. Exploration
(of concerns)
2. Identify the Problem
a. What lies at the root of the concern?
b. How widespread is the problem?
3. Determination of Group Interest in Work on the Problem
4. Information-gathering About the Problem
5. Planning for Resolution of the Problem
a. Set objectives
b. Determine strategies and activities
c. Build support
6. Implementation of Plans
a. Engage in activities
b. Assess efficacy of roles
c. Assess movement of stages of plans
7. Evaluation
a. How effective are the plans and activities?
b. What needs to be done?
8. Forecasting for the Future
a. What new objectives must be set?
b. Where do we go from here?
Knowledge
+
Attitude
+
Skill
PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS

Figure 2. The problem-solving process

than to gamble on a big victory to start with and the risk of a big defeat and subsequent discouragement? This, then, becomes a strategic consideration.

Group interest in the problem. Having sufficiently culled the basic problem from peripheral ones, and having clarified the formulation of the problem (the precise statement of the problem in terms acceptable to all), a determination must be made: Is the group interested in working on the problem?

Information-gathering. If there is a consensus on the statement of the problem as the main issue to be tackled, and if the group has determined to work on the resolution of the problem, the next step is to gather as much information about the problem as can be secured. (See in the chapter on community assessment where data can be gathered.) For example, are there other community groups working on this same problem? If so, what are they doing and what have they done? What is the broad community impact of this problem - is it neighborhood-based or deeply rooted in unresolved issues in the larger community? Who are the persons, and which are the agencies or institutions, who have a direct relationship to the emergence of this problem in the community? Have these persons, agencies, or institutions been made aware of this issue as a problem in the neighborhood and community? If so, who made them aware? Are there statistical data available to substantiate the existence of this issue as a problem? If so, can this data be secured? What else needs to be known about the problem?

Planning for resolution of the problem. Having achieved as much relevant information as possible about the problem to be worked on, planning for solving the problem then proceeds.

The group must set objectives for its work. Members should ask: Are we sure we are seeing the problem according to the real needs of the community? Shall we work on the total problem, or on one specific part of it? What do we hope to achieve as a result of our planning and activities? What can be achieved now, and what must we look forward to achieving in the future? What are the priorities for work at this time? Where are the strengths that we can rely upon? Where is the opposition? Who represents them? What relative power have those who are with us? What is the power of those who are against us? How are these power centers balanced? What kinds of pressures must be applied in order to achieve our goals? How are those in positions of power going to react toward these pressures? What are other more efficient strategies to achieve our goals?

In determining our goals and objectives, are we clear in what we want to achieve and what changes we seek to introduce?

After the objectives are clearly established and priorities set, the group decides what activities will be undertaken for the achievement of the objectives.

It is important to resolve the following questions after objectives are clearly stated:

1. What kind of organization is necessary to carry out program?
2. What resources are needed?
3. How can support be developed and maintained?
4. How can opposition be neutralized, won over, or defeated?
5. How can indifferent individuals or groups be kept neutral or won over?

6. How can conflict be handled so as to gain allies, neutralize potential opposition, and keep the "enemy" from gaining allies?

Strategic thinking is essential to decide in advance, as much as possible, how far conflict should be pushed, depending on strategic considerations. Since almost any change involves some conflict, covert or overt, this should be anticipated.

A strategic standard that can be utilized in this determination is to ask the question: Will this program result in enhancement of the problem-solving capacity of the group or community? Even a big victory purchased at expense of problem-solving capacity, e.g., by manipulation behind the scenes, may be a strategic defeat. On the other hand, even a small success, e.g., new swings for a playground, may be a significant strategic gain. How much and what kind of conflict can be "handled" has to be assessed in this light. Success in a "quiet" conflict on a small or big problem may be more significant than a big, noisy conflict leading nowhere. On the other hand, dramatic conflict, even over a small problem, may be necessary. Decisions must be based on strategic assessment.

The group should guard against oversimplification of the concepts of "power and power structure." Rather, people should think in terms of power processes and relationships: in almost any social situation even the weakest group has some power or potential power, and even the strongest group has some factional, or other, struggle going on within it. Or, a group is opposed at times by other strong power groups. Thus, state power groups may be pressured by federal groups or a school system may be pressured by a municipal system. Strategic consideration should be given, not only to mobilizing the power of the weak, but to penetrating part of the "upper" power groups and to gaining support there. Sometimes one or two "upper individuals" can be crucial in this.

This means negotiation, bargaining, etc., from a well-organized base; it does not mean "seeking favors" or "begging."

Members of the group must assume responsibility for the activities that have been outlined. In some instances, individuals will pursue agreed-upon activities; in other instances, subgroups will accept such responsibilities. It is not always necessary, but is desirable, that all group members assume roles in the various task activities developed during the planning stages of the problem-solving process.

Important, also, are plans for eliciting the support of others -- individuals, groups, programs, agencies and institutions. Planning for such support is crucial at this level, because the group must understand very early in its experience that it may not be possible, through its efforts alone, to resolve the problem that it chooses to address.

Implementation. This stage of the process might be termed implementation of plans. In this stage, the planned activities are put into operation. Opportunities must be provided on a planned basis for the total group to be kept abreast of developments.

This means that as individuals and subgroups fulfill their assumed responsibilities for the pursuit of certain activities, opportunities will be provided for reporting to the total group concerning their progress or lack of progress.

It is possible, as subgroups pursue their responsibilities, that a determination may have to be made to change the original plans because they are not proving productive. This phase of the implementation stage is one in which the group assesses the efficacy of the roles that members have been asked to carry and also the strategies used in the action. If changes are needed in these roles, they should be appropriately made, with the approval and understanding of the total group and with the consent of those who carry the roles.

Further, an assessment of the movement of the total plan is important at various periods during the implementation process. This informal assessment can provide opportunities for replanning and reformulation of activities and strategies in order better to achieve the agreed-upon objectives.

It may also be useful during this stage to give support to the "doers" by providing opportunities for them to "role-play" some of the situations that they will face in fulfilling their assigned activities. This can prepare the parents psychologically for their actual experiences and give them practice in utilizing the information they have gathered to support their positions.

Evaluation. This stage, presumably, takes place at the close of the implementation stage. However, a useful approach would be to evaluate continually throughout the problem-solving process, with an overall evaluation to follow at the termination of implementation activities. Evaluation should proceed on the assumption that effective action will open doors to the identification and solution of new problems. The group should ask itself: What have we achieved? How effective were our plans, strategies, and activities? Has the action resulted in improvement? What tensions and pressures has the action created in the community? What new events have affected the implementation of our plans? What changes in direction, focus, and strategy occurred as a result? What might have been done differently? Has critical opposition and resistance been utilized constructively?

Forecasting for the future. This stage in the problem-solving process provides an opportunity for the group to determine the new objectives that must be established, based on their evaluation. A new course of action may be recommended for future efforts. The questions are: What still needs to be done? How can we strengthen these areas of weakness as we pursue other efforts?

Utilizing the problem-solving process, parents gain many benefits, including experiences in decision-making, community outreach, identification of needs, and the acquisition of knowledge and skill in coming to grips with their problems.

Learning from such experiences prepares parents to organize and move community groups toward effective action in behalf of their communities.

The Staff Advisor to a Community Action Group

Role of the Staff Advisor

The staff person assigned to work with the group of parents -- the social worker, the parent coordinator, the community aide, or any other -- has a specific role to play.

First, he needs to utilize his understanding that community action programs embrace a wide range of issues and rhythms in group movement. Second, the staff advisor needs to help the group determine who should be involved for the action to be effective. There are instances when social issues should be limited to simple steps taken within the group itself. Other instances require an outreach of the total structure of Head Start and the Community Action Agency. And there are times when the total community should become involved. Through examples, we can better analyze the roles that a staff advisor can play in circumstances where these three levels of involvement are necessary.

The first example describes the process by which the staff advisor helped the members of the group to take steps within the group itself because the nature of the problem required only an action within the group. Purposely, it focuses on the problem of a minority group in a PTA setting.

> "Our PTA is cold and prejudiced -- they only talk about raising money and organizing committees and it's run by a small group who won't let others in." Looking for an issue, I picked upon Mrs. G's use of the word "prejudiced." "Do you feel this is a situation of Anglo-Spanish prejudice?" Several nodded agreement on this and told of efforts to get in and then giving up when they felt rejected and left out.
>
> Mrs. V said, "You're just not aggressive enough!"
>
> I clarified: "Spanish people, you mean?"
>
> "Yes," she went on, "people take advantage of you and you let them."
>
> Mrs. G told how she is trying and doesn't regard herself as not aggressive. She accepted a position as chairman of the clothing committee and couldn't get any help from the officers, but she's not going to give up. Agreeing with Mrs. V, she pushes on. She told the group how she complained that the officers wouldn't help her after saying they would and now the PTA secretary won't even speak to her at meetings.
>
> Mrs. O told how she was shunned by the sandwich committee when she offered to help. Mrs. J says the officers are "cold and getting colder -- if only we could talk at PTA like we do here." She continued her testimonial with comments on how this group has helped her more than any other -- "You make us feel like we can talk about anything."
>
> The PTA came up again with the group's realization that change may require that they get some Spanish-speaking people elected. "How do you do this?" I asked, and they discussed making some suggestions to the nominating committee, etc. Someone asked, "Is this like the bathroom problem? -- Nothing can be done until we become sophomores, then we can become the favored group and pick on the poor Anglos who come?"
>
> I recognized this as a good point, and said "Maybe what we're feeling is the kind of frustrations our kids talk about -- how much can we change and how? What about being Spanish -- is it this -- Do Spanish people expect to be put down?"
>
> Mrs. J asked, "How can we expect to teach equality to our children when we don't feel it ourselves?"

> Several talked about how they do not feel equality is a problem for their children. The children have the advantage of speaking good English and of "thinking in English." Mrs. J added that her husband would never speak up at a PTA meeting for fear he'd "say something wrong. In a group he's slow because he thinks first in Spanish and has to transpose it to English." Someone added they wouldn't feel comfortable speaking up at a PTA meeting.
>
> I asked, "Why not? You speak up here." Several talked around the point that "We think alike here," and I added, "But you didn't know that before we started the group." I pinpointed the question further by suggesting that many parents at a PTA meeting, by virtue of their common concerns as parents, which we all seem to have, probably feel like they do but also remain silent. What we've done in this group is simply uncover our common concerns for our children and talk about them.(6)

The second example focuses on the need of the staff advisor to move the group to a point where they realized their need to reach out to the total structure of Head Start and the CAA.

> Mrs. G began by saying that her children were at school right on the same block with the Center and that they were having a lot of problems that weren't their fault.
>
> Even before Mrs. G finished speaking, there were groans of sympathy from the other mothers, with Mrs. S and Mrs. K indicating that their children were preschoolers but that they had heard a lot about the school that made them look ahead with dread.
>
> Mrs. M pointed out to the group that she didn't even have to hear about it from friends -- it was in the newspaper. The group began to discuss very heatedly the newspaper report of a teacher who had been removed from the school. I had not read this newspaper item, so the parents filled me in. One of the several teachers in the school who had been notorious for disciplinary methods had painted the face of a child yellow as a form of punishment for his disobedience in refusing to put his paints away.
>
> Mrs. G was best able to tell what had happened, since she is an officer of the Parent Association in that school. There was considerable discussion around what the child had done, whether it had happened once or twice.
>
> I interjected a comment at this point to the effect that I wondered if it really mattered what the child had done exactly. Would such a punishment be suitable under any conditions?
>
> Mrs. M picked this up immediately: "Yes, what are we doing, spending so much time figuring out what he did or didn't do? The point is that that is a crazy thing to do to a child."
>
> Mrs. G responded by saying that the parents who took action were aware of that. Mrs. K asked what had happened to the teacher, and in response to her question there was much anger expressed that she had been removed from

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6. This and the following example are from case records of a local program.

the school -- but that they were spending sleepless nights wondering which child she was humiliating in her new school.

"It isn't enough to care only about your own child," Mrs. M said. There were murmurs of agreement but comments like, "What are you going to do?" "What can you do?"

At this point, Mrs. G replied angrily that there were plenty of things you could do but that parents had to hang together. "I've been to some meetings where no more than five mothers showed up. Five mothers in that whole stinking school. And, I'd talked to dozens on the phone and in person. All of them saying sure, they would come. What can you do if they don't show up?"

Mrs. P, who had been listening quietly, suddenly shot out: "You're lucky you got five at a meeting. People don't care. They don't come and they don't care and the sooner you know that the better off you'll be!" Mrs. F shook her head regretfully and the others protested vociferously.

This only encouraged Mrs. P further. "When did anybody you know get together and do anything?" She went on to relate an experience she had had in which she ended up being the only person espousing a cause.

Mrs. M said: "Maybe it's the way you did it that shook everybody up. How about that? Did you think that maybe it was a good thing you were pushing for, but in the wrong way?"

The last comment seemed to stop Mrs. P for a second, and she seemed thoughtful but pushed on. Mrs. F said with some eloquence that she didn't think one failure was reason to give up. She cited her own experience in getting her child into the Center after she had been told she was ineligible. Other mothers also gave examples of times they had gotten some action. She was talking about a group. Mrs. G said that she wasn't satisfied that they were moving ahead. Mrs. P interrupted her, saying, "The only way you're going to move ahead in that school is to get a bomb and blow it up."

There was a great deal of laughter and disapproval at this remark, the disapproval being voiced primarily by Mrs. M and Mrs. F. Mrs. M turned again to Mrs. P like a Dutch uncle and said, "You know, Mrs. P, you've got a lot to learn about how to go about getting things."

Mrs. P countered by saying that she knew Mrs. M's type -- the kind who was always getting philosophical and religious and patient about things. Mrs. M looked as if she was going to blow up but wasn't going to let it happen.

I intervened at this point, remarking that there were strong differences of opinion being expressed, some mothers feeling more hopeful about what could be accomplished, others not too hopeful. They all seemed to be in agreement that something should be done.

The ultimate movement of this group was to elicit support and help from other groups in the structure, who helped to bring positive results.

The third example illustrates the role that the staff advisor has to play with a group when the nature and scope of the problem they address include the total community. Note how the staff advisor began with the expressed concerns of the parent group and helped the group move toward the involvement of the whole community.

> At the first meeting each member of the group, and at all subsequent meetings each new member, was asked to express something about which he had wondered or something which concerned him. When this had been done, each concern was explored to determine what the real concern was and to help focus on the salient factor in the concern. The group member was then asked to give an example in order to tie this to something concrete for himself and the other members, and he was helped to transfer this to his point in focus. Other members of the group were encouraged to explore their encounter (either real or vicarious) with the same concern and to share their thinking and feelings around it.
>
> When it was ascertained that each member of the group shared the particular concern, salient facts were reiterated and underscored for the group in order to leave no doubt as to the fact that the concern was of general interest to all. For example, mosquito fogging; each parent presented the concern and problem around the mosquitoes. One mother stated that the mosquitoes bit the children and these bites became infected as a result of scratching. Before the summer was over, the children were one mass of impetigo sores. All of the mothers contributed their encounter with the same problem. One mother contributed that since medical attention was so inaccessible, this intensified the problem and if the mosquitoes could be controlled, this would get at the root of the trouble.
>
> The group leader reiterated all of the expressed concerns and problems around the mosquitoes. When this was clear, the question was then asked, "What, if any, suggestions do you have as a beginning solution to this problem?" Immediately, the group suggested fogging by the city as the control. The leader examined with the group what they meant by fogging. What previous experiences had they had with fogging? What did fogging entail? In the final analysis, the group requested fogging by the City Health Department.
>
> The group was informed that their request would be shared with the Advisory Committee, and a report on the committee's discussion would be given at the next meeting.
>
> Upon presentation to the Advisory Committee, it was learned that a petition bearing the names of 100% of all residents of the area had to be presented to the City before fogging could be done. The laws regulating this procedure were explained and the reasons for the laws. Four women of the group agreed to canvass the area and secure signatures.
>
> When signatures of the neighborhood were secured by the group, these were presented by group members to Dr. P of the Health Department and fogging began in the area immediately.
>
> When the people of the area saw the City Health Department in the process of spraying, they were confident of their abilities to get some community action and had great pride in the results of their activities.

One member of the group, Mr. L remarked that the area had many problems which they wanted to do something about, but they had never known how to go about doing it. Now he realized that they did not have the know-how but they had benefited from this experience and could perhaps do more.(7)

Behind the role played by the staff advisors in these three examples are basic principles which guided their decisions of what to do in a given moment and how to use themselves in the group to facilitate the group process.

Guiding Principles for the Staff Advisor

The staff advisor who would work effectively with parents on their community concerns should keep in mind the following principles:

1. A group becomes community-action-focused when it has moved beyond the activity that first brought its members together to a position where they locate a community problem or issue they wish to do something about, within their own group, within the Head Start structure, or in the community-at-large.

2. All community action should be goal-directed and should involve a process within which those who are most affected by the issues are participants at every level.

3. Effective community action should be, in part, based upon a broad understanding of the community, its mores, traditions, population composition, resources -- or lack of them -- attitudes, assets, and problems.

4. Parents can and will come to grips with their problems when they understand the nature of these problems, sense the support of others, and feel some hope that their efforts can be productive -- immediately or in the future.

5. Identification of common goals toward which groups can work can help minimize differences that may exist between individuals and subgroups within a group, and may help to promote coalitions of what appear to be disparate community groups.

6. Social problems are interlocking. It may happen that the analysis of one social ill will reveal its relationship to other equally pressing problems. Solutions to problems are also interlocking. The process of determining possible approaches to solving one particular problem may indicate the need to address related problems before answers to the primary one can be found.

7. All social problems cannot be solved by the efforts of community groups. It is essential that parent groups determine, in the analysis of their problems, what they can do alone, what has to be done in collaboration with others (groups, organizations, etc.), and what must be handled by others. The latter category might include those problems that require basic changes in social systems that govern the state, nation, and world.

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7. Excerpted from a case record from Project ENABLE.

8. Groups should be selective; priorities for community action must be established if successes are to be achieved. With full regard for the interrelatedness of problems and concerns, a group should establish a goal for action toward which its energies and resources will be purposefully directed, allowing for only minimal digressions -- based on necessities -- from a planned course of action.

9. Democratic means must be used to achieve democratic results; that is, the means and the ends must be in harmony. Experiences in group self-determination, decision-making, the development of skills and confidence in identifying and addressing concerns, increased knowledge and understanding about issues and the operations of systems of many kinds must be provided. As individuals and groups experience these kinds of democratic functions and gain these insights and skills, they are gaining the equipment essential for citizen participation in areas that they will select for community action.

10. Community action always involves encounters with groups of people with different ideas, positions, feelings, etc. The encountering of these groups necessarily activates the unsolved conflicts that exist between or among them. This is one reason why one needs to accept and to deal creatively with conflicts of different kinds, specifically conflicts of power. One objective of community action is to uncover appropriate and useful strategies through which these conflicts can be faced and handled so that desirable social changes can occur.

Policy Advisory Bodies

Particular attention should be given to the role of the policy advisory bodies (committees and councils) and their role in the forwarding of community action. The EOA, revised December 23, 1967, provides that:

> Where a community action agency places responsibility for a major policy determination with respect to the character, funding, extent, and administration of and budgeting for programs to be carried on in a particular geographic area within the community in a subsidiary board, council, or similar agency, such board, council, or agency shall be broadly representative of such area, subject to regulations of the director which assure adequate opportunity for membership of elected public officials on such board, council, or agency. Each community action agency shall be encouraged to make use of neighborhood-based organizations composed of residents of the area or members of the groups served to assist such agency in the planning, conduct, and evaluation of components of the community action program.

This provision makes mandatory, at the CAA level, the involvement of community residents. This, presumably, could include Head Start parents on the membership of boards as well as councils. At this level parents who brought experience with them to Head Start group programs, or gained experience in this way, may find it possible to make broad contributions to the development of community action programs for the total community.

The revised act further provides that each community action board shall:

> . . . have a full opportunity to participate in the development and implementation of all programs and projects designed to serve the poor or low-income areas with maximum feasible participation of the residents of the areas and members of the groups served, so as to best stimulate and take full advantage of capabilities for self-advancement and assure that those programs and projects are otherwise meaningful to and widely utilized by their intended beneficiaries;
>
> . . . have at least one third of its members chosen in accordance with democratic selection procedures adequate to assure that they are representative of the poor in the area served;
>
> . . . be a continuing and effective mechanism for securing broad community involvement in the programs assisted under this title.

For the structure of Project Head Start, the mandate that grantee and delegate agencies provide appropriate policy advisory bodies is clearly spelled out in the Head Start Manual of Policies and Instructions (1967). It is important to note the functions delegated to these bodies for the approval appointment of staff and for the preparation and submission of proposals and budgets.

For effective functioning on such powerful community bodies, many parents require preparation and support, which should be generously supplied by the staff of Project Head Start. The opportunities provided for participation in such bodies reinforce the gains made by parents as they are involved in problem-solving and decision-making processes in other levels of the program.

The participation of parents in policy-making bodies prepares and encourages parents to organize and utilize their own community groups to have influence and power in the issues focused upon by the War on Poverty. This can be extended to other issues that are pertinent to the people of the community. The process of action is the same, the issues may vary. To work with Head Start in the War on Poverty is to learn how residents of a community can act together to improve its conditions through the mobilization and coordination of its resources, promotion of institutional change, advocation of the rights of residents, and participation in the political process, increasing advantages and opportunities for its inhabitants.

Chapter IX

DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR PARENT PARTICIPATION

This chapter outlines one possible approach to the development and implementation of training programs for parent participation. Experienced trainers may find this chapter useful in testing and comparing their own approach with the one presented here. Less experienced trainers may find the specific concepts and information helpful in conducting their own training programs.

The content of this chapter is divided into three major sections: basic concepts and principles; implementation, based upon a suggested model for training; and an example of a teaching plan.

BASIC CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES

Training

Training is a specialized form of teaching. In Head Start, training is directed toward increasing the effectiveness with which workers perform their jobs; that is, training is focused on practice. This emphasis on practice means that training includes, but is not limited to, education in a traditional academic sense. This distinction is well illustrated by the remark of one trainee, who commented, "I got a good education in psychology, sociology, and political science, but not much help in doing my job better." In Head Start the success of training is measured in terms of the increased ability of practitioners to perform their jobs.

The training staff's expectations of how the Head Start practitioner should function on the job influence the form and substance of a training program. For purposes of training, is he viewed essentially as a functionary who is expected to carry out dictated instructions and responsibilities with as much technical skill as possible? Or is he viewed as a developing practitioner who can use what he has learned in creative and productive ways, initiating innovations as situations and circumstances demand? In Head Start training programs, the primary aim is to develop personnel who are in a state of "becoming," meshing technical competence with differing individual work styles that are acknowledged and valued.

Project Head Start is itself a new and innovative program that operates in a variety of settings and under diverse conditions. As a result, personnel must learn to function with thoughtful flexibility in whatever setting and to contribute toward changing the directions and structure of the setting itself, if necessary. Training, then, should be directed toward helping Head Start personnel learn and develop strategies for resolving the work problems that confront them. The training program must supply relevant knowledge and a store of specific skills and techniques that can be rationally applied in solving particular problems.

If the practice-oriented emphasis on training is to be meaningful, the training program must be set at a level that is appropriate to the training needs of the trainees. The assumption is made that those to be trained are actively engaged in the work of Head Start and that they bring with them certain bodies of knowledge and repertoires of skills and techniques. In the course of training, it will be the trainer's responsibility to expand and enrich this knowledge and experience.

In this reorganization and re-evaluation of the trainee's basic knowledge, training should be characterized by a reciprocal exchange between trainer and trainee. In this way, the training program takes into account the background of the trainee as well as that of the trainer: teacher and trainee learn from each other. Moreover, because Project Head Start is a profound human enterprise in which personnel must function with sensitivity as well as competence, training should itself be a humanizing experience.

Training Programs

A training program is an integrated, rational system for teaching a specified group of agency personnel. Thus, each training program should be especially designed to meet specific training needs. The construction of such a training program begins with the decision that training is needed and is to be undertaken, thus setting in motion a complex, continuing process. Seen in broad outline, this process entails:

1. Deciding on the nature of the training that is required
2. Constructing a model for training, upon which the program is built
3. Implementing the program

Inherent in these three parts are issues and problems that need to be resolved through meticulous, purposeful planning and deliberative decision-making. There is a range of possibilities to be considered in making these resolutions, and it is this range of choices that provides opportunities for creative, imaginative work.

Particular thought should be directed toward developing new possibilities to fulfill training needs. Mechanical utilization of familiar, comfortable patterns of thinking and operating may be inadequate in dealing with the novel demands of Head Start.

The Sponsor

The sponsor is the organization responsible for developing and conducting a training program. In Project Head Start, possible sponsors are:

1. Those provided within the Head Start structure, on an individual center, restricted area, or regional basis -- for example, regional training officers or the national office of Head Start.
2. Those provided through contractual arrangements with Head Start, usually on a regional basis, such as universities or public or private training organizations
3. Those provided within individual centers through in-service training and career development programs

Planning

Planning is the orderly arrangement of all the activities that comprise the training program. It seeks to secure a balance among the components of the model for training and is directed toward the achievement of training objectives. Planning should be continuous throughout the life of the project. Sufficient time must be allocated for all the planning functions.

Planning is the responsibility of the designated sponsor, who delegates this function to a selected training staff. The training director is the central person in the planning process, and he retains authority, responsibility, and accountability at all times. While responsibility is fixed and specific, it does not follow that planning is solely confined to the training staff. If the purpose of the training program is to meet the program needs of those designated for training, all persons -- including prospective trainees -- who can help identify and meet these needs should be actively involved in planning.

Table 4 shows major groups of persons who can be potential sources of help in planning. Some guides in the use of these resources follow:

1. The use of resource persons must be carefully planned by the training staff. Objectives, potential contributions and roles, and organizational arrangements should be detailed.
2. The choice of resource persons depends on the projected nature of the training program -- its size, scope, purpose, and emphasis.
3. It is important that the resource persons be briefed on the nature of the program, the contributions expected of them, and their obligations (in terms of time, energy, expense, and professional commitment).
4. Similarly, appropriate feedback should be provided to resource persons so they will be informed of program decisions and of the progress of the training program. The selection and use of resource persons remain the sole responsibility of the training staff.
5. Consideration must be given to the most economical and efficient use of resource persons.
6. The use of resource persons can be supplemented through assigned reading material and visits to program sites.

Table 4. Potential resource persons and their contributions to planning

Resource Persons	Contributions
Curriculum and training specialists, both within and outside of Head Start, e.g., educators or trainers	1. Suggestions for curriculum development 2. Suggestions for teaching methods 3. Applicability of teaching-learning theories

Table 4 (continued)

Resource Persons	Contributions
Resource and research persons from relevant disciplines, e.g., sociologists, psychologists, political scientists, etc.	1. Application of relevant theory, research, and strategies to program implementation
Representatives from appropriate service agencies, e.g., public school personnel, health officials, etc.	1. Specialized knowledge of conditions and attitudes in the community affecting Head Start 2. Suggestions as to possible relationships between agencies and Head Start and how to implement these relationships 3. Attitudes and perceptions about parents living in poverty and problems in providing services to them 4. Information as to the status and contribution of Head Start in the community
Head Start parents and other residents from the Head Start community	1. Knowledge of personal needs, interests, and community concerns which can be addressed through the local Head Start program 2. Reactions to the operational functioning of the local Head Start center re practices, attitudes, parent-staff relationships, range and responsiveness of the program to their needs, etc. 3. Suggestions for emphasis and content to be covered in the training program.
Local center Head Start staff, including prospective trainees	1. Knowledge of their own specific training needs and practice problems, and assessment of priorities of these 2. Knowledge of local community conditions that affect the operation of the Head Start center

Table 4 (continued)

Resource Persons	Contributions
Local center Head Start staff, including prospective trainees (continued)	3. Information as to previous and concurrent training experiences, background data on staff, etc. 4. Information re problems related to their participation in this training program, e.g., financing, transportation, training, conflicting program demands, etc.
Head Start staff, e.g., regional training officers, parent consultants, national staff	1. Knowledge of overall training needs on a regional or national level 2. Knowledge of Head Start philosophy, policies, procedures, etc. 3. Knowledge of practices and problems in Head Start centers 4. Contacts with persons or agencies which can be helpful to the training staff 5. Knowledge of other training programs

IMPLEMENTATION

Model for Training

The model for training delineates the major components to be covered in the training program. The model should be constructed with a view toward incorporating all the parts of the program into a cohesive, logical whole.

An example of a model for training is considered in the following pages. The components of the model are:

1. Objectives for training
2. Designation of trainees
3. Curriculum content
4. Methodology
5. Evaluation

Objectives of Training

Objectives clarify what the trainees need to learn in order to perform their jobs in the most effective and efficient manner. These objectives state specifically what is to be achieved through the training experience, articulated in short-term and long-term goals:

1. Short-term objectives are those that meet the needs of the trainees in respect to the most immediate demands of program tasks.
2. Long-term objectives are those whose full benefits are derived after continued application of the outcomes of training experiences. These objectives are reflected in the extent to which the program achieves its goals.

Objectives are determined on the assumption that the trainees hold legitimate job positions, at whatever level, that are necessary in order for the center to fulfill its functions. Further, these job positions are not autonomous, isolated entities, but are coordinated and integrally related to both parent involvement and the total Head Start program.

Designation of Trainees

The primary consideration is the choice of staff to participate in the training program. The emphasis is on strengthening the program and achieving parent involvement objectives through the joint training of specially designated combinations of staff, rather than on providing for the professional growth of individual staff members per se.

There are many possible combinations of staff that can be involved in a training program. These combinations should be based upon the consideration of specific program demands and ways to meet them. Alternative possibilities should be considered and a rational choice made from among them.

Previous training, education, and experience are not necessarily the primary determinants of who is to be selected for training. The coalition of personnel with differing backgrounds and job positions offers opportunities for reciprocal learning and the forging of new patterns of staff relationships and division of labor. In this respect, the attendance of the project director or an administrative substitute can be essential, since the application of learning often depends upon administrative support and sanction.

While designated trainees are generally confined to employed staff, circumstances may make feasible the consideration of additional personnel, such as Head Start parents, volunteers (program or board), or delegate or CAP agency staff. For example, in small programs with limited staff, volunteers who play a significant part in the life of the center should be considered.

The designation of personnel to be assigned to training may need to be tempered by realistic operational circumstances, such as maintaining the program with the least disruption. Sometimes, however, it is possible to change the organization of the program to accommodate pressing needs for training.

Curriculum Content

The content must be selected in response to the needs of the trainees in relation to current program needs. Content should be comprised of a blending of knowledge, values and attitudes, and skills and techniques. Theory should be balanced with practical application. The organization of the training program should be explained to the trainees so that they can understand the relationship of every part of the training to the overall training plan.

The level of content (that is, the degree of abstraction or sophistication) must be responsive to the readiness of the trainees. At the same time, the content must have learning potential for each of the trainees, who, as individuals, bring differing backgrounds and various work settings to the training program. Provision must also be made for the specialized needs of subgroups; for example, personnel who work in urban settings have different requirements than do those who work in rural areas. Parent aides have different needs as compared to project directors. Individual circumstances dictate the answers to such questions as: Should there be common content for all trainees? Or should trainees be divided into homogeneous groups by setting and by job position.

The contents of this curriculum suggest basic subject matter to be included in training programs on parent participation.

Methodology

Methodology refers to three aspects of the training program: logistical arrangements (that is, the organizational details necessary to implement the training program), the organization for teaching, and teaching methods.

Logistical arrangements. Organization of logistical arrangements requires explicit attention to many details. While these details need to be planned from the beginning, provision should be made for flexibility, so that appropriate modifications can be made in response to changing circumstances.

A well-organized program provides a smooth flow of events and conserves time and energy for teaching. It also helps create an atmosphere that testifies to the importance placed upon training.

> Dissemination of information. Information about the training program should be disseminated well in advance of the start of the program. This allows trainees time to make arrangements to continue program activities in their centers with the least disruption.
>
> This advance information should include the purpose of training; the curriculum content and teaching methods; appropriate organizational details, such as duration, dates, and location of training sessions; the training staff, including consultants and resource persons; and obligations that the centers assume by their agreement to participate.
>
> At this time, preliminary registration and financial arrangements, if relevant, can be attended to. The training staff can use registration information for purposes of planning.
>
> Training information should be sent to central administrative staff, such as CAP directors, as well as to the trainees.
>
> The general content for training should be known from the outset, so that material that needs administrative sanction and support in the program center can be facilitated. For this reason, it is desirable that the

director be involved in the training program even though he may be highly trained and experienced.

Timing. Timing refers to the duration of the program, dates of the meetings, number of sessions in a given day, and the length of each session.

Location of meetings. For regional meetings, a community can be chosen for its central location or because the community has some special relevance for training. For example, an especially active parent group may be used for teaching purposes.

Meeting rooms must facilitate the achievement of teaching objectives and support learning. The aim is to enhance effective communication whether the meeting is for a large lecture group or a small discussion group. The room should be comfortable, well-ventilated and heated, with adequate seating. Adequate supplies and equipment, such as microphones, blackboards, etc., should be provided.

The trainee group. The size and composition of the group are important. Steps must be taken to ensure that each trainee feels personally involved. Questions to be considered are: Should different staff positions be integrated or separated? Should volunteers and employed staff meet together? Should there be a common content for all trainees?

Problems of trainees. Financial problems can prevent participation or seriously interfere with learning. Therefore, financial arrangements should be agreed upon prior to registration.

Personal concerns, such as babysitting or being away from one's family, can also present problems that need to be considered.

Conflicting commitments to job responsibilities can result in nonattendance. Except for urgent reasons, arrangements should be made to enable trainees to attend all sessions as scheduled. Arrangements can sometimes be made for trained volunteers, regular substitutes, or rearranged staff responsibilities to provide for continuation of program activities.

Organization for teaching. The organization for teaching takes into account the make-up of the training staff, the teaching plan, the setting of the contract, and the group process.

The training staff. The training staff should be qualified to achieve the objectives of the training program. Their responsibilities include selection and organization of teaching content and methods; curriculum development; interpretation to, and recruitment of, trainees; consultation with resource persons; orientation and specification of role responsibilities of part-time leaders, resource persons, and consultants; preparation of teaching materials and equipment; the writing of reports; and evaluation.

Part-time leaders, resource persons, and consultants need to be carefully chosen on the basis of their contribution to teaching and their expertise. It is useful to have Head Start consultants available to interpret and validate guidelines, policies, and procedures.

The teaching plan. A teaching plan should be prepared for each session. This plan includes teaching objectives, content, teaching methods, leadership of the session, and resource persons, equipment, and supplies, including special materials to be used. Also included is an overall time plan outlining how the time for the session is to be apportioned. It is important to understand that these plans are to be used flexibly and can be changed during the training session if this is appropriate. However, the value of detailed preplanning is as a guide toward the achievement of stated objectives. It is an open question whether spontaneous "free-for-all" discussions achieve this or satisfactorily resolve any basic issues and questions trainees bring to them.

Setting the contract. The training program, as well as each session, should be opened by a "setting of the contract," which spells out the purpose and nature of the session, the content to be covered, organizational procedures, obligations of those conducting the program, and obligations of trainees. This procedure structures the session and provides both trainers and trainees with a common understanding of what is to be undertaken.

The group process. Training sessions should be considered as group meetings, and the trainer is obligated to function as a group leader, using his skills in "group process" fully and consciously. A detailed consideration of the group process is presented in Chapter V, but a summary of group process relevant to the teaching situation is given here.

The group leader (trainer) is responsible for attending to so-called housekeeping chores. He sees that the room is properly and comfortably set up with ventilation and heating, water, microphones for large meetings, tables and chairs, lighting, blackboards if required, etc.

The group leader is responsible for creating rapport in the group. He should be present in the meeting room early, so that he can personally greet each trainee. During the meeting, he must listen attentively to what each person has to say and must involve the participants both as individuals and as members of the group. To help the members begin to come together as a group, the leader should be attentive to the identification of individuals with himself and with other members, to the building of a group bond, and to the establishment of a structure for the proceedings.

These qualities of the group, which are in a constant process of development, should be initiated in the setting of the contract described above. The leader is responsible for maintaining control over the group process at all times and must not relinquish or abdicate this role to the trainees or consultants. He should be aware of the flow and rhythm of the meeting, of the interaction, participation, and involvement of the members, of the focus and relevancy of the content, and of the movement of the group toward the accomplishment of the objectives of the meeting.

The teaching plan should be closely adhered to, although enough flexibility should be maintained to meet emerging circumstances. If changes are made in the contract as stated at the opening of the session, such changes should be discussed and agreed upon by the group.

The conclusion of the meeting should tie up the work of the session and provide trainees with a sense of wholeness and completion. This conclusion is accomplished through a review and summary and an evaluation of the proceedings. The leader should explicitly identify the principles discussed and show the relationship between this session and the content of other sessions. If written materials have been distributed, the leader should undertake to explain their content and how they can be used most meaningfully. Agreement should be reached at this time on the next steps or future action to be taken.

Teaching methods. The teaching methods should be chosen to correlate the teaching objectives with the content and the composition of the trainee group. In determining which teaching methods will be most effective, the trainer must resolve the following questions:

1. Which methods will best convey knowledge and content, will enable trainers to confront attitudes and values that trainees may hold that obstruct productive work in their center, and will most readily teach and refine skills and techniques?
2. Which methods will make what is learned most meaningful in practical application on the job?
3. Which methods will stimulate and motivate the trainees to learn?

Methods should be chosen on the assumption that learning will take place in group rather than individual settings and should represent enough variety to minimize fatigue or boredom.

In the choice of methodology, communication between the trainer and trainees should be emphasized. Attention must be given to group interaction, since most important learning takes place through the exchange of ideas and experiences among group members. Further, the language the trainer uses should be simple enough so that all the trainees can easily and accurately understand what is being conveyed.

Table 5 outlines various teaching methods, their purposes, uses, and implementation.

Table 5. Teaching methods

METHOD	PURPOSES, USES, AND CHARACTERISTICS	IMPLEMENTATION
I. By type of meeting		
1. Lecture	1. Conveys knowledge and information	1. Lecturer, training staff, or resource person is knowledgeable about subject matter
	2. Provides common frame of reference to all trainees at one time	2. Specific aspect of subject matter to be discussed should be clearly stated

Table 5 (continued)

METHOD	PURPOSES, USES, AND CHARACTERISTICS	IMPLEMENTATION
1. Lecture (continued)		3. Generally, presentation should not last longer than one hour 4. Provision for follow-up is necessary, and can take form of: a. Formal, brief reaction by other knowledgeable person(s) b. Questions and comments by individuals in audience c. Audience divided into buzz groups that may or may not report back to total group d. Lecture in general session followed by separate session of small group discussions
2. Panel	1. Conveys knowledge, information, or experiences through discussion by panel members 2. Provides differing views, which can be compared and contrasted	1. Moderator should be skilled discussion leader 2. Size of panel should be limited so that each person will have sufficient time to participate fully 3. Form of presentation by panel members can vary: a. Each speaks briefly in rotation, then all discuss issues b. Moderator states questions to be discussed by panel members 4. Panel members should agree upon format and focus before the session

Table 5 (continued)

METHOD	PURPOSES, USES, AND CHARACTERISTICS	IMPLEMENTATION
2. Panel (continued)		5. Moderator should summarize major issues and views presented 6. May or may not have audience participation
3. Symposium	1. Conveys knowledge and information through presentation of different aspects or views on agreed-upon subject 2. Audience learns as individuals	1. Moderator states the issue and specifies aspects of it that will be considered 2. Each speaker presents his views; usually no discussion among speakers and no participation with audience 3. Number of speakers limited by aspects to be covered within a given time period 4. Speakers should agree on content before the session
4. Workshop	1. Conveys knowledge and information with emphasis on practical application	1. Led by knowledgeable resource person 2. Size of group is limited (10-20) so that each member can participate or practice skills under supervision of resource person
5. Discussion group	1. Conveys knowledge and information through participation of group members 2. Group members themselves are the resource persons although experts with specialized knowledge may be available	1. Led by skilled discussion leader 2. Size of group is limited (10-20) to allow for full participation by members of group 3. For more detailed discussion, see section on discussion groups in Chapter V.

Table 5 (continued)

METHOD	PURPOSES, USES, AND CHARACTERISTICS	IMPLEMENTATION
II. By method 1. Demonstration	1. Uses skits, movies, slides, recordings, or other materials 2. Provides common experience to group members as basis for discussion or shows how materials can be used	1. Purpose of demonstration must be specified in support of teaching objectives 2. Group should be prepared or agree upon specific questions to be considered in discussion after demonstration
2. Role-playing	1. Spontaneous acting-out by group members of a situation or problem under consideration	1. Roles and characteristics of the situations should be detailed 2. Role-playing should go on only as long as necessary to demonstrate issues or process to be elucidated 3. Useful to allow actors to state their reactions and feelings 4. At times, useful to replay the scene, after discussion, with actors changing roles or using other group members 5. Group leader must be skilled so that actors will play their roles seriously, without self-consciousness
3. Problem-solving or case study	1. Poses specific question or problem that group members try to solve 2. Focuses on practical application through incorporation of knowledge and information	1. Problem should be written and represent an authentic situation 2. Enough details should be provided to avoid generalities although group will have to make some assumptions, which should be specified 3. Specific questions should be raised

Table 5 (continued)

METHOD	PURPOSES, USES, AND CHARACTERISTICS	IMPLEMENTATION
3. Problem-solving or case study (continued)		4. Useful to divide group into work groups of 3 to 5 to allow for maximum participation. Each work group should report back to total group for discussion 5. Group leader should explicitly identify concepts
4. Buzz groups	1. Divide large group to get participation of subgroups quickly on a very specific problem 2. Designed to share thinking of total group in relation to reactions to lecture, make group decisions, share common experiences	1. Instructions to buzz groups must be clear 2. Task assigned to buzz groups must be simply focused 3. Mechanism for reporting back to total group must be planned
5. Field trip and observation	1. Provides group with common experience for discussion 2. Provides method for understanding applicability of theory and knowledge to specific situations	1. Experience must be planned to support teaching objectives 2. Group members must be prepared so that they will consciously look for common aspects in this experience 3. Must be accompanied by discussion to identify concepts, principles, and processes

Evaluation

Evaluation measures the effectiveness of the training experience and provides an opportunity to assess the program's value, its workability, and its implications for the future of both training and program implementation

Evaluation should be provided for in the beginning stages of program planning. All those involved in the training experience, including training staff, trainees, consultants, and resource persons, should participate in the evaluation, and appropriate feedback should be provided.

Evaluation occurs at several levels: after each session in the training program, at the end of each phase of the program, and at the completion of the total program. The design and construction of the evaluatory instruments to be used at each of these levels and the analysis and interpretation of findings may call for the services of a technical consultant.

Findings from the evaluation should be used to forecast future training plans. Training in one form or another is a continuing process, and efforts should be made to encourage and assist staff in individual centers to build upon what has been learned. In-service training, orientation, and supervision are forms of training used in the continuing process of strengthening the parent involvement program.

EXAMPLE OF A TEACHING PLAN

The following teaching plan was devised as part of the final phase of a four-phase training program covering a span of one year. Two of the sessions in this final phase were devoted to principles and concepts of communication as they affect the implementation of program activities in parent involvement.

The first session, attended by all the trainees, dealt with basic principles and concepts on communication and their application in practice. The teaching method used was that of a lecture, given by two speakers. The lecture was conceived as a dialogue between the speakers, one stating principles, the other illustrating the applicability of these principles through case examples taken from Head Start.

The second session was a follow-up to the first and reinforced the basic principles and concepts that were taught. The methods used were discussions and analysis of case examples.

Teaching Objectives

1. Clarification of basic principles and concepts of communication enumerated in the general session
2. Illustration of the applicability of these principles and concepts by drawing upon specific case illustrations
3. Reinforcement of the individual learnings on communication of each trainee
4. Relation of learnings on communication to previous content on process, negotiations, the use of power, recruitment, teamwork, and work with groups and individuals

Teaching Content

1. Material presented in general session, both principles and case illustrations

2. New case illustrations drawn from the group
3. Relevant material from previous sessions on negotiations, power, teamwork, etc.

Methodology

1. Three-hour session, from 2 to 5 p.m.
2. Primary teaching method: small group discussion with maximum of fifteen trainees
3. Leadership of groups: training staff
4. Consultants and resource persons: national or regional Head Start staff to respond specifically to questions on communication problems within the Head Start structure, the role of each to be discussed by the group leader prior to the meeting
5. Suggested allocation of the three hours:

    a. First hour -- group discussion to clarify and reinforce principles through case illustrations drawn from group; role-play if and when appropriate
    b. Second hour -- division of group into four work groups to do problem-solving exercise; each work group to appoint leader and reporter; training staff and consultants to act as resource persons if necessary
    c. Third hour -- reports from small work groups; training staff to expedite reporting, lead discussion, identify principles, raise questions, and state implications that do not come from the group

Materials To Be Distributed

1. Problem-solving exercise (see accompanying example)

Time Plan for the Session

1:45-2:00	Housekeeping chores, greet group members as they arrive
2:00-2:15	Welcome to group, introductions, announcements if any, setting the contract for the meeting
2:15-3:00	Relation of communications material to previous learnings, showing relevance to training program and parent involvement; review of basic principles and concepts; discussion of these in relation to questions and case illustrations from group
3:00-3:15	Break
3:15-4:00	Explanation of problem-solving exercise; division of members into small work groups; work on exercise
4:00-4:40	Reports from small work groups; discussion
4:40-5:00	Summary by group leader; brief evaluation of session by group

PROBLEM-SOLVING EXERCISE FOR SMALL WORK GROUPS: "NEGOTIATING THE HEAD START STRUCTURE"

Background

The Blue River Head Start Center, serving a small, semirural community, is in the process of preparing a funding proposal for its second year of operation. There is general agreement that the program needs to be expanded next year to include children living in the outlying backroads of the community. These children come from families who are either on public welfare or survive on the barest subsistence level. They are isolated from, and rejected by, the larger community, which values self-reliance, independence, and "getting ahead." They have only occasional social contacts among themselves. Their older children are thought to be problems in school, by staff and students alike, because they do poor academic work and are often disruptive.

One of the problems confronting the Head Start center is lack of transportation, either public or private, to get these children to the program. It is known that the buses used by the public schools could accommodate them, but getting the approval of school authorities is judged to be difficult even though the Board of Education is the delegate agency for the Head Start program.

The superintendent of schools, who values his reputation of running a tight ship, has strongly discouraged any cooperative relationship in joint program planning, sharing facilities or equipment, etc., between the schools and the Head Start program. However, he has insisted upon keeping tight administrative control over Head Start policies. For example, he has stated that he has sole responsibility for appointing the Head Start director. The superintendent is particularly distressed because he feels that the Head Start parents are taking over the program in areas which he believes require professional competence.

The members of the Board of Education, who are elected officials, are not expected to look with favor on making the public school buses available to these potential Head Start children. They believe it would be politically indiscreet to provide bus service against prevailing community attitudes toward these families.

The Head Start center has decided to enter into negotiations with the school authorities to get bus service for these children. They believe this is a sensible and workable solution to the transportation problem, that this will add to their nonfederal share, and that this will begin to build cooperative relationships with the schools. The center is in the process of planning its strategy for the negotiations. One of the first decisions was to negotiate first with the superintendent, then with the Board of Education for formal approval.

Problem

A. Use the principles and concepts discussed in the general session on communications and the negotiating process to plan an overall strategy for the first meeting with the superintendent. Include as many relevant considerations as you think necessary.

B. Do the same for the meeting with the Board of Education.

(Note: Make whatever assumptions are necessary.)

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